

Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



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Editor’s Note: The President was in New York City on June 16, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, June 16, 2000

**Statement on House of
Representatives Action on
the Estate Tax Legislation**

June 9, 2000

The House has jeopardized our fiscal discipline by passing a costly, irresponsible, and regressive plan to eliminate the estate tax. If this bill were presented to me in its current form, I would veto it without hesitation.

Repealing the estate tax would undermine our record of fiscal discipline as well as the progressivity, fairness, and integrity of the tax system. The cost of this bill explodes from \$100 billion this decade to over \$750 billion in the following decade, just as the baby boom generation is retiring and Medicare and Social Security are coming under strain. This bill gives the largest estates a windfall while steering only a tiny fraction of the benefits to small businesses and family farms. By the end of the decade, the bill would provide a \$50 billion tax break that would provide only 54,000 estates—about 2 percent of all decedents—with an average tax cut of \$800,000. Furthermore, studies by economists have found that repealing the estate tax would reduce charitable donations by \$5 billion to \$6 billion per year.

I am supportive of targeted, fiscally responsible legislation, such as the Democratic alternative, to make the estate tax fairer, simpler, and more efficient. I urge the congressional leadership to work with me to relieve the burden of estate taxes for small businesses and family farms in a fiscally responsible manner this year. We can do this while strengthening Social Security and Medicare, investing in key priorities, and paying down the debt by 2013.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Proclamation 7321—Flag Day and
National Flag Week, 2000**

June 9, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Our long national journey has brought the United States safely to a new century and to a position of unprecedented leadership in the world. Throughout that journey, one symbol has endured as a badge of honor for every American and a beacon of hope for the oppressed: the flag of the United States.

For more than two centuries, “Old Glory” has challenged us to make real the highest ideals of the patriots and visionaries who chose it as our national symbol in the early days of our Republic. The flag of the United States has inspired us in battle, reassured us in times of peace, and comforted us at moments of great national grief. In its white stripes, we recognize the sanctity of the American ideals on which our Republic was founded: liberty, justice, equality, and the guarantee of individual rights. In its red stripes, we salute the generations of American patriots who have shed their blood to keep our flag flying over a free Nation. And in the cluster of white stars on an unchanging blue field, we read the story of America’s remarkable evolution from 13 small colonies to 50 great States, with millions of citizens from every race, creed, and country united by the hopes and history we share as Americans.

To commemorate the adoption of our flag, the Congress, by joint resolution approved August 3, 1949 (63 Stat. 492), designated June 14 of each year as “Flag Day” and requested the President to issue an annual proclamation calling for a national observance and for the display of the flag of the United States on all Federal Government

buildings. In a second joint resolution approved June 9, 1966 (80 Stat. 194), the Congress requested the President also to issue annually a proclamation designating the week during which June 14 falls as "National Flag Week" and calling upon all citizens of the United States to display the flag during that week.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim June 14, 2000, as Flag Day and the week beginning June 11, 2000, as National Flag Week. I direct the appropriate officials to display the flag on all Federal Government buildings during that week, and I urge all Americans to observe Flag Day and National Flag Week by flying the Stars and Stripes from their homes and other suitable places.

I also call upon the people of the United States to observe with pride and all due ceremony those days from Flag Day through Independence Day, also set aside by the Congress (89 Stat. 211), as a time to honor our Nation, to celebrate our heritage in public gatherings and activities, and to recite publicly the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., June 13, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on June 14. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Bankruptcy Reform Legislation

June 9, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

I write to urge a fair resolution of the open issues in discussions on bankruptcy reform. I have long made clear my support for legislation that would encourage responsibility and reduce abuses of the bankruptcy system on

the part of debtors and creditors alike. We also must ensure that a reasonable fresh start is available for those who turn to bankruptcy as a last resort when facing divorce, unemployment, illness, and uninsured medical expenses. Bankruptcy reform legislation should strike the right balance.

The House-passed bill was so one-sided that I would have vetoed it. The Senate-passed bill's bankruptcy provisions represented a better attempt to balance legitimate debtor and creditor interests, although I had serious concerns about some aspects. My Administration has watched carefully as the staff and informal conferees have sought to reconcile these two bills. While there appears to be some informal progress on some outstanding issues, it is very important that the resolution of these issues be fair and that we ensure that we do not erode protections for all debtors—when targeting the few who abuse the system. The outcome will help determine whether the final bill tips the scales. I am concerned, for example, that the final bill:

- may not adequately address the problem of wealthy debtors who use overly broad homestead exemptions to shield assets from their creditors;
- may weaken important credit card disclosure provisions that will help ensure consumers understand the implications of the debt they are incurring;
- may eliminate protections for reasonable retirement pensions that reflect years of contributions by workers and their employers; and
- may include an anti-consumer provision eliminating existing law protections against inappropriate collection practices when collecting from people who bounce a check.

Finally, I am deeply disturbed that some in Congress still object to a reasonable provision that would end demonstrated abuse of the bankruptcy system. We cannot tolerate abusive bankruptcy filings to avoid the legal consequences of violence, vandalism, and harassment used to deny access to legal health services. An effective approach, such as the one offered by Senator Schumer's amendment, should be included in the final legislation.

I sincerely hope that balanced, bipartisan bankruptcy reform will be completed this year, but I will not hesitate to veto unfair legislation that fails the test of balance.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; and Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

June 10, 2000

Good morning. As we enter the new century, opportunity is abundant. We're in the midst of the longest economic expansion in history, with 22 million new jobs and the lowest unemployment in 30 years. Yet we know some Americans are finding it harder and harder to balance the demands of work and family. People are working more jobs and longer hours than ever before, forcing many of them to make the unacceptable choice between being good workers and the best parents or caregivers.

Today I want to speak with you about important new steps we're taking to give working Americans the time off they need to care for their families without losing the income they need to support them.

According to a recent Federal study, parents in the average family now have 22 fewer hours per week to spend at home than they did just a generation ago. That's the loss of nearly a full day to spend time with their families. And the percentage of married mothers working outside the home has nearly doubled, from 38 to 68 percent, over the last three decades.

We also know that many of them are working weekends or on the night shift, times they've traditionally spent at home caring for their families. In our round-the-clock economy, there just doesn't seem to be enough hours during the day for working Americans to do everything they need to.

For more than 7 years now, our administration has taken action to give families the flexibility they need to balance the demands of work and home. We've helped make child care safer, better, and more affordable for millions of families. We've greatly expanded preschool and after-school programs. We fought to give generous tax credits to help the growing number of families who provide care for aging and ailing loved ones at home.

I'm especially proud that the very first bill I signed as President was the Family and Medical Leave Act. Since 1993, more than 20 million Americans have used it to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a newborn or sick relative without fear of losing their jobs. Still there are too many families that aren't making use of the law because they simply can't afford to take the time off if it means sacrificing a paycheck.

Today I'm announcing two new steps that will allow working Americans to take time off they need to care for their families without giving up the pay they need to support them.

First, I'm pleased to announce that States will soon have the option to use funds from their unemployment insurance programs to provide paid leave to new parents following the birth or adoption of a child. While this initiative is totally voluntary, there are already 15 States considering legislation to provide paid leave through unemployment insurance or other means. In fact, Massachusetts may vote on such a bill in the next few weeks.

In this strong economy, I hope more States will take advantage of this new option, and I believe those which do can provide this new benefit while still preserving the fiscal soundness of their unemployment insurance programs. The first few months with a newborn are precious ones, and no parent should have to miss them.

Second, we all know record numbers of Americans are providing for aging or ailing loved ones at home. It's a loving but potentially very expensive choice. That's why, beginning later this month, all Federal employees will be able to take up to 12 weeks paid sick leave that they've earned to nurse an ailing child or parent back to health. If every company in America followed this example,

half of all our workers would have this important benefit for their families.

There are further steps we should take right away to help more parents balance work and family. Again, I call on Congress to extend the benefits of family and medical leave to employees of smaller companies, so we can reach another 12 million American families. And I urge Congress to pass my comprehensive long-term care initiative, which includes a \$3,000 tax credit to meet the growing needs of the elderly and their families.

At the dawn of the last century, Theodore Roosevelt said, "The greatest prizes of life are those connected to the home." Today, more than a century later, our families still are our most valued treasures. That's why I think no American should ever have to choose between the job they need and the parent or child they love. The actions we take today will help to ensure that they won't have to make that choice.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:25 p.m. on June 9 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 10. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 9 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Commencement Address at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota

June 10, 2000

Thank you very much, President Lewis. It's nice to be around someone who is not term-limited. *[Laughter]* To the trustees and faculty members, including your longtime faculty member and now your United States Senator, Senator Paul Wellstone. It's nice to see you and Sheila. Thank you for being here, both of you.

I congratulate Bruno Nettl and George Dixon on their degrees, and I thank the Carleton community for making me welcome. I congratulate the student speakers, Katy and Sachin and Faisal. They were really, really, I thought, very good. I'm glad there was some break between when they spoke and when I had to speak. *[Laughter]* Maybe you won't remember how good they were,

and I'll be able to get through this. *[Laughter]*

I want to congratulate all the members of the class of 2000, your families, and your friends, and I thank you for giving me the opportunity to share this with you.

I've been hearing about Carleton for years. I have a staff member and adviser, Tom Freedman, who is here with me today, class of '85, and his college roommate, John Harris, who—he's on the other side in Washington. He writes for the Washington Post. They're both here, over here to the left. So there is life after college, and they have proved it.

And they told me about the motto, "You are part of Carleton, and Carleton is part of you." They also told me that Carleton is my kind of place, a school that celebrates diversity, a school whose students and faculty exemplify excellence without elitism, a school where the president of the college gets to sing like Elvis. *[Laughter]*

I'm also very proud that someone painted my portrait on the water tower, and I thank you for that. Now, I heard it wasn't the greatest likeness in the world, but I still kind of wish you hadn't painted it over. *[Laughter]*

I also got a souvenir from my stay here, and I want to show it to you. Thank you. And someone asked me if I would give this fellow a ride on Air Force One, to sort of add to the legend, you know? *[Laughter]* And I thought, why not? He looks more like me than that guy on the water tower did. I think I'll do that. *[Laughter]*

I do want to say I love the message that Faisal and Sachin gave about building on our common humanity, and I wrote down what I thought was the best line from Katy Beebe's talk, "Use clichés like they were meant to be used." I think that's pretty good, because we all have them. *[Laughter]* The truth is, I have been paying attention now to graduations for quite some time. And you are graduating at a time which is different. Yes, there are a lot of common elements in this ceremony. Yes, there are a lot of common elements in your feelings. Yes, you're a remarkably diverse group. I could tell that just by shaking hands with you and exchanging a few words. One of you even asked me to change a Government policy. *[Laughter]* Good job.

You have to ask Senator Wellstone. It's an act of Congress now. I can't change it. [Laughter]

But the truth is, this year marked more than a millennial turning of the calendar. This country and the world have entered an era that is different, in the way we work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world. For us, it's a time of unparalleled promise. We have the strongest economy we've ever had and the longest expansion in history, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded.

And yet, it's also a time of increasing social cohesion: the poverty rate at a 20-year low; the welfare rolls at a 32-year low; the crime rate at a 25-year low. It is—in my lifetime, anyway—the only time we have ever had at once so much economic prosperity and social progress and at the same time so little internal crisis or external threat to our existence. We have an opportunity to shape a world, therefore, that is more free and more decent than ever before.

I can't help noting that this is the one-year anniversary of the day when the Serbian troops accepted NATO's terms and began to withdraw from Kosovo^{*}, and we reversed the tide of ethnic cleansing and religious cleansing that was present when almost a million people were driven from their homes. We still have 5,500 Americans there with troops from 39 nations. Almost all of the refugees have gone home. They're going to the polls for the first time in history this fall. So I'm very proud of that.

But it shows that it's a very different world. Not so many years ago, it would have been unthinkable that America would be part of a multinational force, deployed just to stop people from being murdered or uprooted because of their race or ethnic background or religion, and I'm glad we did it.

The world is moving to the beat of two great forces: globalization and the revolution and knowledge of information technology, the biological, environmental, and material sciences. And our whole pulse is quickening with all this new discovery and interaction.

I have worked very hard to prepare this country for the 21st century, and now it be-

longs to you, and it's up to you to decide what to do with it. I hope very much that you will use this moment to deal with the big challenges and the big opportunities that are still out there for us: to bring prosperity to people and places that are still poor and haven't been caught up in this recovery; to end child poverty and give all our children access to a good education; to give families the time and tools they need to balance their work at home and their work at work; to deal with the challenge of the aging of America; to reverse the tide of climate change; to put a human face on a global economy; to maximize the potential of science and technology and minimize its new risks; to build one America across all the lines that divide us; and to build a world where the forces of peace and prosperity and humanity are stronger than the old demons of war and disease and poverty.

Now, you have a chance to do that, in no small measure because you spent the last 4 years here. And I want to talk just very briefly today about one specific subject, our common obligation to give all young people the chance you've had to develop the abilities, the understanding, the feelings, the outlook that you have developed here in your years at Carleton.

It's important because in the world we live in, it's the only way to guarantee our Founders' dreams of opportunity for all, so it's important individually. But from my point of view, it's even more important because unless we can more generally spread the benefits of education, your generation will not be able to build a future of your dreams.

Two centuries ago opportunity meant having a chance to carve out a farm on the forest frontier. A century ago it meant a chance to work in a factory with reasonably decent conditions and give your children a chance to get a high school education. Today, opportunity requires the constant ability to learn and relearn, to master new tools and new technologies, to think broadly, to adjust quickly, to put things in context. It means every American needs more than a high school education. It means a college education is not a luxury.

In the coming years, the number of new jobs requiring at least a bachelor's degree will

^{*} White House correction.

grow twice as fast—more than twice as fast—as those that don't. The three fastest growing occupations require at least a bachelor's degree, and their pay, of course, is much better than average.

So I have a simple message today which is that our country cannot afford to leave any students behind simply because they can't afford to pay for college. I came from a family where nobody had ever gone to college before, and yet, from the time I was a little boy, I never had any doubt I was going, because that's what my family told me I was going to do. And thanks to my family and scholarships and loans and jobs, I got opportunities that eluded all my parents' generation and, unfortunately, eluded all too many of my contemporaries in high school.

When I became President, I was determined to do what I could to give every student that chance. I am well aware, if it hadn't been for that chance that I had so long ago now, to go to school, I wouldn't be standing here today.

So, what does it mean to give every young person the chance to go to college? First, we have to begin at the beginning. We've worked on education reforms to make sure all of our kids start school ready to learn, finish high school ready to succeed. We've expanded early childhood education; supported higher standards, more choice, and greater accountability for results in our schools; extra help for kids who need it, from after-school to summer school to mentoring programs; new efforts to attract talented teachers, reduce class size, modernize classrooms, connect all of them to the Internet. That's the first part of this.

But the second thing we've tried to do is to open the doors of college to every American. In 1993 we created something called the Direct Student Loan Program. It has lowered the cost of all borrowing and all loan programs and saved America's students, in lower interest costs and charges, \$9 billion over 7 years. That program also allows students to pay back their loans as a percentage of their income.

In 7 years, we expanded Pell grants more than 40 percent and increased the work-study program so that now a million young college students are in work-study. On a

thousand campuses, a lot of them are earning money by teaching young children to read in elementary schools. AmeriCorps is now giving 150,000 young people a chance to earn money for college and serving in their communities. Education IRA's now let families put savings in IRA's and then withdraw them for college expenses—tax free.

We created the \$1,500 HOPE scholarship tax credit to make the first 2 years of college as universal as high school and to help families afford the last 2 years, as well as graduate school and job training. We set out to launch a lifetime learning tax credit which provides a 20 percent credit against tuition and fees.

Now, this year alone—those things were done in '97—well over 10 million Americans will use HOPE scholarships and lifetime learning credits to open the doors of college and opportunity.

In the past 7 years, most of which we spent trying to get rid of the deficit, America has more than doubled college aid, the greatest expansion since the GI bill 50 years ago. It has proved to be a great investment. Today, coincident with this speech, I am releasing a report which demonstrates that as student aid has increased, so has college attendance, now to record levels. Fully two-thirds of our high graduates go straight to college. That's an all-time high. And for the first time in history, a majority of young African-Americans are enrolling in higher education.

The report also documents what you already know: The value of a college education in sheer economic terms is going up. The earnings gap between those who have a degree and those who don't is growing dramatically. Over the course of a career, a person with a bachelor's degree will earn, on average, \$600,000 more than a person who has a high school diploma. The return on a college investment is now nearly double the stock market's historical rate of return.

Now, this report, on balance, is good news. But it has some sobering information. With all the new financial aid and even though the rise in tuition costs have slowed over the past few years, most families still have to stretch to pay the college bills. Over the past 20 years, the cost of college has quadrupled. I'll bet there are a lot of parents here who have

taken second mortgages or second jobs to help pay those tuition bills.

So I'd like to do one other thing in this area before I go, and I hope the Congress will do it this year. I would like to build on the success of the HOPE scholarship and the lifetime learning credits with a \$30-billion college opportunity tax cut. It would allow families, whether they're in the 15 percent or the 28 percent tax bracket to claim a tax deduction worth up to \$2,800 for up to \$10,000 in college tuition costs. It would make a big difference to a lot of families in this audience today, and I think it ought to be done.

Again I say, I know it's important for individual opportunity, but we have to recognize that we're living in a time when investment in human capital is even more important than investment in physical capital. This would be some of the best money this country ever spent.

I also hope we'll do more this year to help young people out there who are still, believe it or not, unaware of how important and how possible college is. Maybe nobody is pushing them to take the classes they need, or they don't know how to get the financial aid. I have asked, and I ask again, the Congress to work with us to expand our initiatives, called GEAR UP and TRIO, to reach out to students as early as the sixth grade to give them the dream that they can go to college and to determine to do what it takes to succeed once they get there.

Now, if we do these things, we can provide more students with the support they need, give more families the relief they need, give our economy the skilled work force we all need, and give our Nation more active, informed citizens. At long last, we've got the money to do it. The only question is whether we have the vision and will to do it. We owe it to your generation to do that.

Think about this. A hundred years from now the Carleton class of 2100 will be sitting where you are. They'll look up at this podium, and perhaps they'll see a President reflecting on the 21st century, the good old days. I hope that he or she can say that we began this century in the right way.

I offer all of you my congratulations for the challenges you've conquered, the

projects you've completed, the goals you've reached. You should be very proud. And as you embark here, I hope you'll never forget one other thing, implicit in what all other speakers have said. All your individual lives will unfold in the context of community, your local community, your national community, and increasingly, the global community. If you want to make the most of your own lives, you have to give something to all of your communities.

As the years pass, I am convinced that your generation will be judged most, and you will tend to judge yourselves most, on the ways in which, large and small, you give something back to the whole. If you do that, then you will be more than leaders in arts and science, business and industry. You will be great citizens of our Nation and the world.

I honestly believe the next 50 years can bring the greatest period of peace, prosperity, and humanity the world has ever known. It depends upon whether we do the right thing for the future and whether we understand that our common humanity is far, far more important than all the things that divide us.

May Carleton always be with you. Good luck, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:38 a.m. in the Bald Spot Quad. In his remarks, he referred to Stephen R. Lewis, Jr., president, and Katherine Beebe, Sachin Patel, and Faisal Mohyuddin, students, Carleton College; Senator Wellstone's wife, Sheila; and Bruno Nettel and George H. Dixon, honorary degree recipients.

Remarks on Arrival in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and an Exchange With Reporters

June 10, 2000

Death of President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria

As all of you know, I received word not very long ago of President Asad's death in Syria today. I was very saddened by it, and I want to offer my condolences to his son, his family, and to the people of Syria.

You know, over the last 7 years, I had the occasion to meet with President Asad many times, and I believe I got to know him well.

And while we had our disagreements, I always respected him because I felt that he was open and straightforward with me and because I felt he meant it when he said he had made a strategic choice for peace. I regret that that peace was not achieved in his lifetime, and I hope that it can still be achieved, in no small measure because of the commitment he made.

I think today, rather than speculating about the future, it would be best for all of us just to send our condolences and our best thoughts to his family and to the people of Syria.

Thank you.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, since he was such an integral link in the process, is this going to delay the future of the process? How is it going to affect the expediency of the process that you've been trying to jump-start recently?

The President. Peter, [Peter Maer, CBS News] I think it's premature to say. There will be a period of mourning in Syria. There will be a period of sorting out, and the Syrian people will make some decisions, and then we'll see what happens. But you know, we've been at this now for years because of the decision that he made to go back to negotiations and try to move away from conflict, and it's certainly a path I hope the country will stay on.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:17 p.m. at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to President's al-Asad's son, Bashur Asad. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on the Death of President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria

June 10, 2000

I am saddened by the news of President Asad's death and want to offer my condolences to his family and to the Syrian people.

Over the past 7 years, I have met him many times and gotten to know him very well. We had our differences, but I always respected him. Since the Madrid Conference, he made a strategic choice for peace, and we worked together to achieve that goal.

Throughout my contacts with him, including our last meeting, he made clear Syria's continued commitment to the path of peace.

We look forward to working with Syria to achieve the goal of a comprehensive peace.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in Minneapolis

June 10, 2000

Thank you very much, Vance. Thank you, Darin. And thanks for being my friend for such a long time, and thank you for giving us a little walk through memory lane. [Laughter] I'm still proud I was a child of the sixties. [Laughter]

I never have known what I was supposed to be embarrassed about. I remember President Bush used to refer to me as the Governor of a small southern State. I was so dumb, I thought it was a compliment. [Laughter] I still feel that way.

I want to thank my friend of more than two decades, Joan Mondale, for being here, and for all the years that we've shared together. I'd also like to thank your former secretary of state, Joan Growe, for being here. Thank you, Joan. Sandy Novak, thank you. And I'd like to thank the people here from the Minnesota Teachers Group for their leadership in this event and for sticking with the Democratic Party and for their support of education reform.

Let me say, first of all, I am glad to be standing here, because in the last week I have been to Portugal, Germany, Russia, Ukraine. I came back to the United States to meet with the King of Jordan, and then I flew to Japan to the funeral of Prime Minister Obuchi, then came back to meet with the President of Mexico. And now I'm here. [Laughter] I feel like a character in that H.G. Wells novel, "The Time Machine." [Laughter] But if by some chance I should slip a word or two here, you'll just have to make some allowances for me. [Laughter]

I would also like to thank Mayor Rendell. He didn't really plan on leaving the mayoralty of Philadelphia and taking this little part-time job that I talked him into.

One other, just—thing I want to say preliminarily, I've been to Minnesota three times in the last 5 weeks—[laughter]—and it's really funny, because I was screaming to the point of irritability at my scheduling staff for months before that. I said, "Look, here's three places that I have not been in 2 years, and I'm really upset," and one of them was Minnesota. I said, "I really want to go." [Laughter]

So then, they said, all right, you know. So Fritz Mondale and I went to a farm in David Minge's district to talk about the China vote, and then I went to St. Paul on my education tour, to the first charter school in the United States. There are now over 1,700 thanks to our administration pushing that, and they're working well.

And today I got to speak at Carleton about the importance of opening the doors of college to everyone. It's been a really rewarding thing. The people of Minnesota have been so good to me and to Al Gore and to Hillary and to Tipper. You know, I still remember when we rolled into Minneapolis on the bus tour in '92, we were about an hour and a half or 2 hours late, and there were over 25,000 people in the streets. And I think Vice President Mondale kept the crowd there—[laughter]—by hook or crook. So I'm very grateful to you.

I just want to say a couple of things briefly—one other thing. I want to thank Vance for helping Hillary, too. She's doing well. You'd be proud of her. I think she's going to win that race, and I'm very, very proud of her.

When we took office 7½ years ago—Al Gore and I and our whole team—we were animated by some fairly basic ideas. One is that we could have good economics and good social policy, but to do it, we'd have to get rid of the deficit and have to go through the fire of doing that. The second was that we could grow the economy and improve the environment. The third was that we had to stop the politics of personal destruction and the kind of old rhetoric that had paralyzed Washington and try to find some way to bring the American people together as a community. And the fourth was that we had to abolish the distinction between domestic and foreign policy—that in the 21st century, in a

globalized society, it really wasn't going to be as—there are some things that are clearly, discretely foreign policy-oriented, like what we did—this is the one-year anniversary of our victory in Kosovo over ethnic cleansing, something I'm very proud of. But by and large, we needed to begin to look at the world more in terms of how it affected us here at home and look at how we were—what we were doing at home in terms of its impact around the world.

So, for example, I think that it helps America that we're trying to relieve the debts of the poorest people in the world, that we now treat AIDS as a national security problem. I know Senator Lott made fun of me the other day when our administration announced that we considered the AIDS problem to be a national security problem, but I think it is. Seventy percent of the AIDS cases are in sub-Saharan Africa. There are countries there that are now routinely hiring two people when there is a job vacancy because they expect one of them to die within a few months. And this could wreck whole societies, wreak havoc on the continent, just at the very time when Africa offers the promise of new partnership to so many of us.

Anyway, we had these ideas, and so we set about trying to make them work. And lo and behold, they did. And I'm grateful for that, and I thank you. But I just want to make a couple of points very briefly, because somebody might ask you why you were here. And if you say, "Well, I wanted to shake hands with Bill Clinton," that's a good answer, but that won't get any votes for us.

The first thing I would like to say is that ideas matter in politics, and they have consequences. And while we have had our fair share of good fortune, it flowed from a set of ideas and policies that we implemented. The second thing I want to say is, there was, 8 years ago, there was, 4 years ago, and there is today a significant and honest difference between the two parties. It is not necessary for us to do to them what they worked so hard to do to us, to convince the American people they're bad people, and they're no good, and we should tar and feather them and run them out of town. There are differences.

The previous administration vetoed the family and medical leave law as being bad for the small business economy. I signed it and said it would be good for the small business economy if parents weren't all agitated all day every day about whether their kids were sick at home. And now, in each of the last 7 years, we've set new records for small business formation. The debate's over, but the American people may not know it.

The previous administration vetoed the Brady bill on the grounds that it was an infringement on the constitutional right to keep and bear arms and wouldn't do any good because crooks didn't buy guns at gun stores, they bought them at gun shows. That's what they said. Now they say they don't buy them at gun shows, but anyway—[laughter]—back then they said they did, and that it was an incredibly burdensome thing, and so they vetoed it.

We passed it and signed it, and it turned out 500,000 people who were felons, fugitives, and stalkers did buy guns in gun stores, and we stopped them. And gun crime is down 35 percent; homicide is at a 30-year low; overall crime is at a 25-year low, and not a single hunter has missed a day in the deer woods. So the debate is over. We won that debate. We were right, and they weren't.

And we raised the standards for air quality, for water quality, for land conservation. We set aside more land permanently in protected areas than any administration except those of the two Roosevelts. And I think we've proved you can grow the economy and improve the environment at the same time.

I say that not to be self-serving but to say that they are ideas; they have consequences. We need to tell people this. And if you look at the debate today, you see the same sort of debate unfold. That's the first thing I want to say.

So what are the issues today? Well, first of all, there's a big issue, huge issue—what do you think we ought to do with this situation we've got in America today?

Now, in my lifetime, we have never had at the same time an economy this strong, so much progress on the social issues, and the absence of domestic crisis or external threat. The last time we had an economy this strong and a lot of the social indicators were begin-

ning to look good was in the 1960's, and it came apart because of the civil rights challenge at home and the Vietnam war abroad. So I'm not sure it's ever happened in the history of America, but in our lifetimes, it had never happened before. The last longest economic expansion in history, the one that consumed the 1960's from '61 to '69, and it ended because we couldn't reconcile our external problems over Vietnam, our internal problems over civil rights, the economics associated with it, and the social fabric came apart, and I remember how it ended.

I graduated from high school 9 weeks after Martin Luther King was killed, 2 days after Bobby Kennedy was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for President anymore because the country was too divided. A few months after I graduated from college, the last longest economic expansion in history ended.

So these things don't last forever. This is highly unusual. So the big question in this election year is, overshadowing everything else, is: What do you propose to do with this? I have done everything I could do to turn this country around, to prepare this country for a new century, a new millennium. And it's your turn now. You get to decide. That's what this election is about.

What are we going to do with all this prosperity? Ideas have consequences. It matters. What I think we should be doing is taking on the big challenges and the big opportunities. I think we ought to say, "If we could create the future of our dreams for our kids, what will we do?" I can only tell you what I think. I think we ought to extend opportunity to the people and places that aren't part of the recovery. I think we ought to make a commitment to ending child poverty and giving every family the time and tools it needs to succeed at home and at work.

I think we ought to make a commitment to giving every kid a world-class education in the public schools and opening the doors of college to all Americans. I think we ought to have a commitment to roll back the tide of climate change and the environment, and to deal with the challenge of the aging of America, so we baby boomers don't burden our children and our grandchildren.

I think we ought to commit to stay on the cutting edge of science and technology not only to reap the benefits but to deal with the most troubling potential burdens that are coming up, including the invasion of our privacy by the explosion of information technology.

I think we ought to commit to continuing to work for one America across all the lines that divide us, and I think we ought to be more involved, not less involved, in all kinds of nonmilitary ways with the rest of the world. I think the trade agreements we made with Africa, with the Caribbean Basin, with China, trying to alleviate the debt of poor countries, the money we're trying to raise to develop vaccines for AIDS, TB, and malaria—these things are all good, and they would directly benefit the United States by giving us a more peaceful, more free, more decent world to live in. That's what I think we ought to be doing.

Now, how do you tell what to do in an election, if you've decided that? So you've got to decide what you think of it, that's what I think. Because I don't know if this will ever happen again in my lifetime, and I'd like to see America not relax, not lay down but say, "This is an unbelievable gift, and we're going to make the most of it."

So what does that mean? That means that you've got to decide who's going to be the President, who's going to get elected to these Senate seats, who's going to get elected to the House seats. What are you going to do if you decide that that's what you want?

Now, there are the following almost certain consequences to the election, based on the differences and ideas. And you don't have to believe that the two candidates for President are anything other than good people. Yes, I think you should believe they're both going to do what they say they're going to do. But you have to believe they're going to do what they said they would do in the primary as well as the general election. [Laughter]

But there's a lot of studies on this, by the way, which show that by and large, even though our friends in the press try to convince you that we're all a bunch of slugs in politics, that Presidents historically have a pretty good record of doing what they say

they're going to do. And when they don't, we're usually glad they didn't. [Laughter] I mean, aren't we glad Franklin Roosevelt didn't balance the budget in the Depression? Aren't we glad Abraham Lincoln didn't keep his promise not to free the slaves? I mean, once in a while, it doesn't happen. But, mostly, people do. An historian did an analysis that said I'd kept a higher percentage of my commitments than the last five Presidents. I was proud of that. But people do that.

Okay, so what will happen? What is the difference in the economic policy? Well, there will be a difference. Al Gore will be for a tax cut that still enables us to invest in education and health care and science and technology and keep paying the debt down to take care of the aging of America. And if you both have a big tax cut and privatize a part of Social Security and guarantee the benefits to all the people that are older, you spend all the surplus and then some right there, before you spend a nickel on anything else. So we're going to have a different economic policy. We're going to go back to see if we can do without these surpluses and balanced budgets. And if you believe both candidates are honorable, that's what's going to happen. And I do.

There will be a dramatic difference in environmental policy, if you believe that both candidates will do what they've been doing. In the primary, the nominee of the other party promised to reverse my designation of over 40 million acres of roadless areas in the national forests, which the Audubon Society says is the most significant conservation move in the last 50 years. So there will be a real difference there in their attitudes in clean air, clean water. How do you reconcile these conflicts?

There will be a huge difference in the crime policy. You saw what Mr. LaPierre, at the NRA convention, said—that if they could just get us out of the White House and the Republicans won, they'd have an office in the White House. Now, I don't know if literally he will; they would probably be a little too red-faced to do that. But that's what will happen. You can book it, that will happen.

And it's not like we don't have any evidence here. You've got evidence. You put more police on the street. You do things to

keep kids off the street. You keep the economy strong. You try to keep going into these neighborhoods that are in trouble trying to change the texture of them, and do more to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and kids. The crime rate goes down, and more people live. This is not complicated.

And they keep talking to me about gun control. I get tickled—I asked one of these—I was at a debate the other day. I said, “You know, there was a constitutional right to keep and bear arms.” I said, “I don’t think you interpreted it right, but let’s just assume you did.” I said, “There’s also a constitutional right to travel.” And I’ve exercised it. *[Laughter]* I said, “Now, when I travel around, I look, and I see there’s speed limit laws, seat-belt laws, child safety restraint laws. I never hear anybody talking about car control. Do you? Now, if I go get your car and put it in my garage, that’s car control.” *[Laughter]* “But otherwise, it’s highway safety.”

There’s a huge consequence here. You’ve got to think about this. There are consequences. In health care there are consequences. We’re for the Patients’ Bill of Rights, and they’re not. And I’ve been for managed care. My record on this is pretty clear. I’ve said that we couldn’t sustain what we were doing in the health care system; we’d have to manage the system better. But I still think the critical decisions ought to be made by the professionals and the patients.

And the court system will change dramatically, because there will be somewhere between two and four appointments to the Supreme Court. And if you think *Roe* against *Wade* should be repealed and that’s an important issue for you, then you should vote for them, because that’s what’s going to happen. And if you don’t, and that’s an important issue for you, then you should vote for us. So there are consequences.

The last thing I want to say is this, to follow up on what Vance said. I know Al Gore better than anybody but his wife, I believe—maybe his mother, who will chide me if I claim to know him better than her. *[Laughter]* She is an astonishing woman—once practiced law in Arkansas 70 years ago—an amazing woman. Here are some facts you need to know. He supported me on every hard decision I ever had to make, whether it was going

into Bosnia or Kosovo or Haiti or helping Mexico when they were about to go bankrupt. And we had a poll that morning that said by 81 to 15, the American people didn’t want me to do it. There was a real winner. *[Laughter]* But I knew it was the right thing to do. We had to do it.

He cast the deciding vote on the economic program, without which we wouldn’t all be standing around here today. Then he cast the tie-breaking vote on the—to close the gun show loophole and put child safety locks and ban large capacity ammunition clips when the Senate voted on that. And in between, he’s done a lot of other things.

He ran our reinventing Government program, giving us the smallest Federal establishment since 1958. The Democrats did that, not the Republicans—eliminated more positions and more programs. And I’ll give anybody here \$5 who can name three of the programs I eliminated. *[Laughter]* There are hundreds of them. We put the money and we doubled investment in education with the money.

He’s managed our environmental programs, including our partnership for a new generation of vehicles. He ran our very successful program to establish empowerment zones in poor areas which have created thousands and thousands of jobs. Ask Mayor Rendell; one of them is in Philadelphia.

He managed a big part of our foreign relations with Russia, with South Africa, with Egypt, with a number of other countries. And you heard what Ed said about the Vice Presidency—I’ve actually done a study of this. Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale were the first two people that ever took the office systematically seriously, in the whole history of America. I love Franklin Roosevelt, but as sick as he was, it’s unbelievable he didn’t take any more time picking Harry Truman and didn’t tell him anything. Harry Truman didn’t even know about the bomb when he became President. Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale were the first two people who ever took the job systematically seriously.

If you look at the whole history of the office, Vice President Nixon and Vice President Johnson had more influence than their predecessors. And then here’s Mondale up here. And to President Reagan’s credit, he gave

Vice President Bush a lot to do and they had more of a systematic relationship. And then when—and Al Gore and I actually made a study of this, what had happened throughout history. And I decided that this was crazy; that, first of all, this guy might be President any day now, especially with the kind of mail I've been getting the last—[laughter]—and secondly, why have a person with a lot of energy and intelligence just hanging around waiting to go cut ribbons?

And so, I put him to work. And I nearly broke him a couple times. I never saw anybody work any harder; he's the only guy I ever met who worked harder than me. But you need to know that there has never been anybody in that job who had more of an impact on more issues across a broader range of areas, and that a lot of the success we enjoy today would not have been possible if it hadn't been for him. So there's nobody that's any better prepared, not only by virtue of past service but by virtue of future orientation.

So I realize this is not a big campaign speech, but you need to think about this. If somebody says tomorrow, "Why did you go there?" say, "Well, but first, I'm really concerned about what we're going to do with this prosperity. It's just as stern a test for the country's character, what you do with good times as what you do with bad times. It's not as if you've got a lot of options, and your back is against the wall. Second, ideas matter, and there are honest differences between the candidates and the parties. Third, I think based on the evidence and the argument, I agree with the Democrats, and here are some examples."

Now, I hope you can all do that, because this is going to be a close election. And part of it—in a funny way, we're almost disadvantaged by how well things have gone. There are young people who are voting in this election who can never remember a bad stock market, never remember high unemployment, never remember the kind of social discord and rising crime and those kinds of things. They just think it happened. It didn't just happen.

And I don't mean by any stretch that I am solely responsible; that's not what I mean. America changed in the nineties. We became

more community-oriented; we became more civically responsible; we became more interested in opportunity for other people as well as for ourselves; and we began to think about tomorrow as well as today. It wasn't just me, I was just a part of it.

But you need to really keep that in your mind between now and November. This is a big election. It's about what we're going to do with our prosperity. It's a stern test, ideas matter, and you think we're right—if you can sell that, I'll feel pretty good about the outcome.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. in the Atrium Room at Key Investment, Inc. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon hosts Vance K. and Darin Opperman; Joan Mondale, wife of former Vice President Walter Mondale; State Senator Steven G. (Sandy) Novak; President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico; King Abdullah II of Jordan; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association; and Vice President Gore's mother, Pauline.

Remarks at a New Leadership Network Reception in Minneapolis

June 10, 2000

Thank you. Wow! [Laughter] I started off today at 5 o'clock this morning in Washington—that's 4 o'clock your time—and I came out to Carleton to give the commencement address. And I came here, and I went to another event. It's just getting rowdier as I go on. You guys are doing great.

I would like to thank my friend and partner Mayor Rendell from Philadelphia, the chairman of our party, for coming out here with us. And I want to thank Mike—you and Mary and all the people have done a great job with this party—all the sponsors. This is just fabulous. And I'm delighted to be here.

And I want to thank the Fine Line Music Cafe folks, and all the people who provided the music. And I want to thank Senator Paul Wellstone and Sheila and their kids and grandkids—the whole Wellstone family is here today. And Representative Martin Sabo, who's daughter is also a candidate here today.

Your State auditor, Judi Dutcher, I want to thank her for being here.

Look, this is a good way to spend Saturday afternoon. [Laughter] And I realize I, in a way, don't need to give a speech because I'm sort of preaching to the saved here. [Laughter] But I would like to say a couple of things anyway, if it's all the same to you. I mean, since I'm the only one in my administration or in my house who is not running for anything this year—[laughter]—I'm afraid I'll get out of practice if I don't get to kind of work out a little. So you all just relax; I want to give you a little bit.

First of all, I want to thank the State of Minnesota for voting for Bill Clinton and Al Gore twice and giving—[applause]. Secondly, I want to thank you for fielding competitive candidates for the House and the Senate to help us win back the majority in the United States Congress which we—we could do.

You know, I think Minnesota is a place where people know ideas matter. I was here on my education tour not very long ago, and I went to St. Paul to the first charter school in the history of the country. And you know, since then, since we got in, there was one when I became President, and there are now over 1,700 because we have worked so hard to get the point out across the country and get the word out that our public schools can succeed, and they can educate our kids. Even the kids from the most difficult circumstances can learn if we had the right kind of educational opportunities for them.

And that to me sort of symbolizes what Minnesota is all about, high ideals—high ideals, high standards, practical approaches to problems involving everybody. And I just want to say to all of you that I think the election we're about to have is every bit as important as the two we just had. Now, in 1992 the country was in trouble, and everybody knew it. The economy was in bad shape. The society was growing more divided. The political rhetoric in Washington was paralyzed and seemed irrelevant to the way most of us live.

And we've tried to turn that around. We've tried to create a society in which there was opportunity for every responsible person and in which we were coming together in a more

closely knit community, in which we were looking outward to the rest of the world and trying to be a force for peace and freedom and prosperity and decency. And we tried to avoid—[applause]—thank you. What I wanted to say is—and there's been a lot of success. We've got the strongest economy in history, and we've got a society that's coming together. Crime rate's down; poverty is down; the welfare rolls have been cut in half. We have the highest rate of minority business ownership in history and the lowest minority unemployment in history in America. We have a lot of things that are moving in the right direction.

So, you say, "Well, how can the 2000 elections possibly be as important as the '92 election was when we were in the tank, or the '96 election was when people were trying to decide whether to ratify the direction we were taking?" I'll tell you why—because once in a lifetime do you find a situation like this in America where the economy is strong, where the society is coming together, where we've got a lot of self-confidence. We're not paralyzed by a crisis at home. We don't feel immediately threatened by a crisis overseas, even though there are dangers out there. This has never happened before in my lifetime, and I'm older than nearly everybody in this room. [Laughter]

Now, and I can tell you this—how a country deals with its good moments is just as stern a test of its character as how it deals with its crises. So what do you think we ought to do? I'll tell you what I think we ought to do. I think we ought to bring jobs to all the people and places that have been left behind. I think we ought to get rid of child poverty. I think we ought to give every working family the time and the tools they need to take care of their kids, as well as work.

I think we ought to deal with the fact that when the baby boomers retire, it's going to impose new burdens on our society. We ought to figure out how to save Social Security and Medicare, provide prescription drug benefits to seniors that need it. I think this.

I think we ought to prove that we can have excellence in every school building in America. I think we ought to open the doors of college to every American. That's what I talked about at Carleton today. I think we

ought to roll back the tide of climate change and prove we can create jobs and clean up the environment at the same time.

I think we ought to prove we can create a global economy where there's more trade and there's higher labor standards and environmental standards and we put a more human face on it. I think we ought to keep working to get rid of all the hatred that still exists in this country, based on race or sexual orientation or religion or ethnic background.

And I think we ought to maintain our involvement with the rest of the world for peace and freedom. This is the one-year anniversary, today, of our formal victory in the conflict in Kosovo, where we stood up against ethnic and religious cleansing and let a million people go home.

But this is way more than military; it's mostly not military. I was ridiculed the other day by one of the leaders of the other party because we said that AIDS was an international security crisis for the United States. Seventy percent of those cases are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Now, you tell me—we've got a lot of allies there for freedom and democracy, and you have people actually hiring two people for every job opening because they assume one of them will die in a few months. We have armies where the infection rate is 30 to 40 percent, where a country can collapse on us, people that we believe in that we're trying to help. So I'm proud of the fact that I think we ought to be investing some of your money to find vaccines for AIDS, for TB, for malaria, for people overseas that need these things. I think that's right.

So here's the deal. I'm not running, but I know a little something about this election. [Laughter] It's just as important as the other two were. If somebody asks you why you're here and why you're doing this, you tell them that. It's a big election. It's a big test of a country how you deal with all these good times. And we've finally got the chance, a chance that we have not had maybe in my lifetime to deal with the big problems out there facing America, to deal with the big opportunities out there. And there's a huge difference between what our party believes and what our nominee for President believes, and what they believe.

You know, whether it is a big issue like maintaining our present economic policy or going for a tax cut so big that we'll go back to deficits, or a more discrete issue, like raising the minimum wage by a dollar over the next few years or not doing it, there's a huge difference. And I'm telling you—everything from the appointment of justices to the Supreme Court to our economic and environmental and health care and educational policies, there is a profound difference.

And it's not like it was in 1992. In 1992, we made an argument, and you gave us a chance. Now, you've got running for President in the Democratic Party, the most experienced, effective Vice President in history who cast a tie-breaking vote on the economic plan in '93 that got us to where we are today; who cast a tie-breaking vote the other day to close a gun show loophole that requires child trigger locks; who has run our empowerment program which has brought thousands of jobs to some of the poorest communities in America; who has managed a big part of our relations with Russia, with South Africa, with Egypt, with other countries; who ran our reinventing Government program and helped to reduce the size of Government, without putting anybody in the streets, to its smallest size in 40 years so we could double education funding while we were cutting the deficit.

Now, there has never been anybody that had that kind of impact in that job who understands the future better. Along the way, he continued with his wife to hold every single year a family conference in Nashville, Tennessee, that dealt with things like family leave, health care for poor children, mental health parity in health insurance policies—the kinds of things that families come to grips with all the time Al and Tipper Gore have been working on for 8 years on their own in a way that has changed the future of America and what we've been able to do.

Now, here's the thing about elections. Somebody besides those of us in this room today get to vote. [Laughter] And most people who get to vote don't ever come to an event like this. And most people who get to vote may never hear me make this case for Vice President Gore or for our candidates

for the Senate and the House or for the fact that we have honest differences.

Then you get these elections where everybody is trying to convince you that anybody that's not in their party, there's something wrong with them; there's something bad. That's not true. We just have honest differences. Most people do what they say they're going to do when they get elected. And I'm just telling you, there are huge differences in economics, in health care policy, in environmental policy, in the constitution of the courts. I could go through every issue.

And it's not like '92, when we had an argument. You have evidence. We have tested what we believe against what they believe, in ways large and small. None of them support our economic policy. They said it was going to drive the country in a ditch. We now know it drove the country to 22 million jobs and the longest economic expansion.

Most of them were against our crime policy, the Brady bill and putting 100,000 police on the streets. They said it wouldn't do any good. They said that all the criminals bought guns at gun shows. Now that we're trying to do a background check at gun shows, they say they don't buy them there. But back then they said they did. *[Laughter]* So we tested it, and 500,000 guns later not in the hands of felons, fugitives, and stalkers; 100,000 more police on the street, more after-school programs for our kids—we've got the lowest crime rate in over 30 years. This is the right thing to do.

So go out there and tell people you're supporting the Vice President and the Democratic Party, number one, because they believe in opportunity for everybody and a community of all Americans. They've got good ideas, and they work; number two, because he had a pivotal role in it; and number three, because looking to the future, you agree with us. Whether it's the Patients' Bill of Rights or getting working families access to health care or raising the minimum wage or reversing global warming or just continuing to grow the economy in a responsible way and reaching out to all kinds of Americans to make their part of our family, you agree with us.

And you tell those people that haven't made up their mind, "Look, there is not an argument now. You've got 8 years of evi-

dence. Go with the evidence. Go with the future. Stick with us, and America will be in a good place."

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:44 p.m. at the Fine Line Music Cafe. In his remarks, he referred to Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Mike Erlandson, chair, and Mary McEvoy, associate chair, Minnesota Democratic Farmer Labor Party; Senator Wellstone's wife, Sheila; and Minnesota State Senatorial candidate Julie Sabo.

Memorandum on Actions To Further Improve the Management of Federal Human Resources

June 9, 2000

Memorandum to the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Actions to Further Improve the Management of Federal Human Resources

The Federal Government's most valuable resource is the talented and diverse group of men and women who work every day to make a difference in the lives of the American people they serve. Effective management of this workforce is critically important to accomplishing your agencies' varied missions and continuing to improve service.

My Administration has made a significant commitment to achieving the highest standards of human resources management and accountability for the American people—but more can be done. To continue to improve Government services, we must (1) recognize and reinforce the critical role human resources management plays in achieving each agency's mission and strategic planning goals, and (2) maintain and strengthen our vision of a diverse Federal workforce that is skilled, flexible, and focused on results and service.

To achieve these goals, I direct the heads of each executive department and agency to take appropriate action to:

- fully integrate human resources management into your agency's planning, budgeting, and mission evaluation processes, and clearly state specific human

resources management goals and objectives in your organization's strategic and annual performance plans;

- renew your commitment to recruit, develop, and manage your workforce to ensure high performance;
- provide for the continued development of a highly competent corps of human resources management professionals to assist agency line managers in ensuring the most effective use of their workforce to accomplish the agency mission.

To reflect the essential role of effective human resources management in achieving agency missions, the Interagency Advisory Group of Federal Personnel Directors, established in 1954, will be redesignated as the Human Resources Management Council. This Council will continue to:

- provide a forum for communicating and evaluating Government-wide human resources management policies and sharing best practices;
- promote collaboration across agency lines and with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to foster policies and actions to achieve our vision of a diverse Federal workforce that is skilled, flexible, and focused on results and service to the Nation; and
- collaborate with OPM to identify and address emerging human resources management issues.

The Council shall continue to be chaired by the Director of OPM or the Director's designee and shall continue to include the senior human resources management official (or designee) from each executive department or agency, including military departments and defense agencies, and other members as proposed by the Chair. Within 30 days of the issuance of this memorandum, the Director of OPM shall officially redesignate the Interagency Advisory Group of Personnel Directors as the Human Resources Management Council.

Beginning on October 1, 2000, and annually thereafter, agency heads shall ensure that human resources management objectives and means to accomplish these objectives are incorporated in their Annual Performance Plans. The Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with OPM, will provide

the guidance for this requirement as part of its overall guidance on Annual Performance Plans.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 12.

Remarks at a Millennium Matinee at the White House

June 12, 2000

[The First Lady opened the program and introduced the event's featured speakers: Marcia McNutt, president and chief executive officer, Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute; and Neil de Grasse Tyson, associate astronomer and Frederick P. Rose director, Hayden Planetarium. Dr. McNutt then discussed ocean exploration, and Dr. Tyson discussed space exploration.]

The President. Well. *[Laughter]* I have a hundred questions. Before I open the floor to questions, I just would like to make a couple of points.

First, I want to thank Dr. Tyson and Dr. McNutt for truly fulfilling the spirit of this wonderful old room. It was in this room, on this floor, with maps and books on animal skins, that Thomas Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis planned the Lewis and Clark expedition. They were exploring the far reaches of North America, looking for an ocean no one believed at that time you could reach by land. Today our speakers have taken us on a very different journey of discovery. They have shown us that new evidence is emerging from both the seas and space about so many things but, as you have heard, among other things, about the challenge of global climate change.

Just this morning some of our leading scientists released a draft report that provides some of the most detailed information yet about the potential impacts of global warming on our Nation. Some of its findings, because it's a draft, may be revised, but essentially this report pulls together an enormous amount of scientific analysis, and as our previous speakers have done, it paints quite a sobering picture of the future. It suggests that changes in climate could mean more extreme weather, more floods, more droughts,

disrupted water supplies, loss of species, dangerously rising sea levels.

Now, I have tried for several years to get the United States to respond to do our part. We are the largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world. In the next couple of decades, China and India will surpass us, unless we all take advantage of the fundamental changes in the nature of the economy to prove that we can have economic growth and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

So it is—if you'll forgive me, I want to make one earthly plea, which is that the Congress stop blocking our commonsense efforts to combat global warming. We need a climate change on Capitol Hill on this issue. And it should not be a partisan issue. This is about science. This is about evidence. This is about things that are bigger than all of us and very much about our obligation to these children here to give them a future on this planet. We are not yet prepared to live under the sea, as we have just been told.

I'd also like to make one other announcement about ocean exploration. In spite of all that we learn today and all that is known, more than 95 percent of the underwater world remains unknown and unseen. And what remains to be explored could hold clues to the origins of life on Earth, to links to our maritime history, to cures for diseases. The blood of the horseshoe crab, for example, provides a vital antibacterial agent. A potential anticancer drug may come from a deep sea sponge.

Two years ago today we held the first National Oceans Conference in Monterey, to bring experts together to chart a common agenda for the 21st century. Among the key recommendations that grew out of that Conference was the need to establish a national ocean exploration strategy.

One of the success stories that has come out so far occurred half a world away on the Navy vessel, the *Trieste*, which you saw in the video. In 1960 the *Trieste* went to an area called the Challenger Deep in the Pacific, the deepest spot in any ocean, nearly 7 miles down. Only two people have been there.

One of those brave explorers was a young officer named Don Walsh. President Eisenhower gave him the Legion of Merit

here in the White House more than 40 years ago. He's here today, and I'd like to ask him to stand up. Mr. Walsh. [Applause] I might say, he looks fit enough to make the journey again. [Laughter]

I would also like to recognize the man who discovered the wreckage of the *Titanic* is here, Dr. Bob Ballard. Can you stand up? [Applause]

I want to announce some new steps we're taking. First, three new, first-of-their-kind expeditions off the Atlantic, Pacific, and gulf coasts, voyages led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in partnership with major research institutions. These expeditions will allow the first detailed exploration of the Hudson Canyon off New York—it's an underwater version of the Grand Canyon, only larger; the Middle Grounds and Big Bend areas off Florida, which include some of the oldest life forms on Earth, giant tube worms—you saw some on the film—up to 250 years old; and the Davidson Seamount, an inactive ocean floor volcano off Monterey. In each expedition, researchers will use cutting-edge deep sea diving technologies and share their discoveries with schools and the public through the Internet.

Second, to ensure that these voyages are the start of the new era of ocean exploration, I'm directing the Secretary of Commerce to assemble a panel of leading ocean explorers, educators, and scientists to develop recommendations for a national ocean exploration strategy and to report back to me in 120 days. These steps could bring about, quite literally, a sea change in our understanding of the oceans.

We must continue as a nation to set out for new frontiers, whether under the sea or into the heavens. We must continue to try to conquer the seemingly impossible, to discover the unimaginable, to find out more about what's out there and, in the process, about ourselves and what's here.

I would like to ask the first question, and then we'll turn it over to the regular process and the many thousands of questions that must be out there in this room and beyond here. I'd like to ask Dr. McNutt and Dr. Tyson what they think the most likely discovery in the next 10 years in their field is that would have a significant impact on how

we live on Earth or what our understanding of our system is?

Thank you.

You go first. [*Laughter*]

[Dr. McNutt responded that within the next decade, hopefully, we would learn to preserve the oceans, keeping them healthy and productive rather than depleting them.]

The President. If I could just emphasize one thing. The point you just made is related not only to pollution, to additional pollution of the ocean and overfishing but also to climate change. When I was in Monterey Bay, I saw small creatures right in the bay that just 20 years ago were 20 miles south. They had made their way 20 miles in 20 years, these minuscule creatures, because before that it was too cold in Monterey for the creatures to exist.

This is real, and we have got—I hate to keep beating on this, but you know what kids used to say several years ago, that denial is not just a river in Egypt. [*Laughter*] We have got to come to grips with this. And you were terrific, what you said about it in your presentation.

Thank you.

Dr. Tyson.

[Dr. Tyson responded that possibly within the next decade, evidence found on Mars or Europa would help us realize that we are not alone in the universe. White House Millennium Council Director Ellen Lovell then led the question-and-answer portion of the program. The First Lady read an Internet question asking the President if sending a manned mission to Mars before 2030 would be an appropriate national priority.]

The President. Well, let me say, one of the interesting things to me was—about the previous discussion—were the comments that were made by both our speakers about the importance of robotic exploration of the deep sea and outer space and about what could be done now with the technology.

So I would leave the question of that first to the space program. But if Dan Goldin told me that we needed to send a man to Mars to find out what we need to know, then I would strongly support it, because I think the United States would make a terrible mistake

to weaken either its space exploration or its undersea exploration. I think we should accelerate it. I think we should invest more money in it, and I think we should keep pushing the frontiers of knowledge.

We just went through a very wrenching period where NASA had to basically learn to do more with less. We were trying to get rid of this terrible deficit. Now we've got a surplus. We're paying down our national debt. We're investing in our future. And I think a big part of that investment ought to be the broadest possible commitment to science and technology, including vigorous, vigorous exploration of outer space and the depths of the ocean.

That's what I believe, and I hope that that will be a commitment the American people will extract from their candidates in this election season and in every one for the foreseeable future, because it's very, very important.

[Dr. Sylvia Earle, explorer in residence, National Geographic Society, and director, Sustainable Seas Expedition, asked about the possibilities for a 21st century focus on further ocean exploration in contrast to the 20th century focus on space exploration. Dr. McNutt responded that the ocean budget was a tenth of the space budget and could not sustain much of an exploration program at its present level.]

The President. If I could just say one word to complement that. My Science Adviser, Dr. Neal Lane is here. We have tried very hard to increase the entire budget for science and technology and especially the research budgets. And basically, what happens is, we get in this debate with Congress. They are more than happy to invest more money in the National Institutes of Health, and that's good. We all want to live forever, even though we're not. [*Laughter*] But there is a—one of the things that I think needs to be addressed, and we're trying to right it a little here in this last budget process I'll be a part of—but I've been fighting this for 3 years now. It's a terrible mistake to think that the only kind of scientific research we need to be healthy on this planet is in biomedical research. It's very important, But to have just that and to neglect what we should be doing in space, what we should be doing in the

oceans, what we should be doing with nanotechnology, what we should be doing with a whole range of other technology-related issues, all of which in the end have to be developed if we're going to know as much as we can about how to live as long and well as we'd like to on this Earth—it's a huge debate. So if any of you can make any contribution to righting that balance, I for one would be very grateful. It's a major, major intellectual challenge that we face in the congressional debate.

Again, I say this should not be a partisan issue. This is a question of what is the right way to do the most for our people in the new century.

[The question-and-answer portion of the program continued. After a final question about the possibility of discovering Earth-like planets associated with other solar systems, Ms. Lovell asked the President to conclude the program.]

The President. Well, I don't know what to say. *[Laughter]* You know, if they're all out there, I hope they have the best of what we have and fewer headaches. *[Laughter]*

Let me say, Hillary and I have enjoyed every one of these, but this has been very, very special. I think our guests were both terrific and all of you who asked questions. Albert Einstein once said, "The important thing is to not stop questioning," which is just what they said. So you don't have to stop questioning, but you do have to stop doing it right here because we're out of time.

And I would like to invite all of you to join us in the State Dining Room for a reception in honor of our guests and all the students and everyone else who is here. Let's go in there, and you can continue your questions. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The White House Millennium Matinee, entitled, "Exploration: Under the Sea, Beyond the Stars," the ninth in a series of Millennium programs, began at 2:37 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, Dr. Tyson, Dr. McNutt, Ms. Lovell, and the participants in the question-and-answer portion of the program. The program was cybercast on the Internet.

Memorandum on a New Era of Ocean Exploration

June 12, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Commerce

Subject: A New Era of Ocean Exploration

Two years ago, the Vice President and I joined you, other members of my Cabinet, and hundreds of others from across the country at the National Ocean Conference in Monterey. This historic gathering drew together for the first time representatives from government, industry, and the scientific and conservation communities to begin charting a common oceans agenda for the 21st century.

At the Conference, I directed my Cabinet to report back with recommendations for a coordinated, disciplined, long-term Federal ocean policy. In its report to me last year, *Turning to the Sea: America's Ocean Future*, the Cabinet outlined an ambitious and detailed strategy to ensure the protection and sustainable use of our ocean resources. I am proud of the actions my Administration is taking to begin implementing this strategy, including the Executive Order I issued last month to strengthen our national network of marine protected areas.

One of the Cabinet's key recommendations was that the Federal Government establish a national strategy to expand exploration of the oceans. Although we have learned more about our oceans in the past 25 years than during any other period in history, over 95 percent of the underwater world is still unknown and unseen. What remains to be explored may hold clues to the origins of life on Earth, cures for human diseases, answers to how to achieve sustainable use of our oceans, links to our maritime history, and information to protect the endangered species of the sea.

Today, I am announcing steps to immediately enhance our ocean exploration efforts and to develop the long-term exploration strategy recommended by you and the rest of the Cabinet. Together, these actions represent the start of a new era of ocean exploration.

First, I am announcing the launch of three new expeditions off the Atlantic, Gulf, and

Pacific coasts. As you know, these expeditions, led by the Department of Commerce in collaboration with private partners, will allow the first detailed exploration of the Hudson River Canyon off New York, the Middle Grounds and Big Bend areas off central Florida, and the Davidson Seamount off central California. Researchers will employ the latest submersible technologies and will share their discoveries with schoolchildren and the public via the Internet and satellite communications.

Second, to ensure that these new expeditions are only the start of a new era of ocean exploration, I am directing you to convene a panel of leading ocean explorers, educators, and scientists and to report back to me within 120 days with recommendations for a national oceans exploration strategy. In implementing this directive, you shall consult with the National Science Foundation, the National Atmospheric and Space Administration, the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other agencies, as appropriate. The strategy should consider the full array of benefits that our oceans provide, and should support our efforts to conserve and ensure the sustainable use of valuable ocean resources. Specifically, the strategy should:

1. Define objectives and priorities to guide ocean exploration, including the identification of key sites of scientific, historic, and cultural importance;
2. Recommend ways of creating new partnerships to draw on the tools and talents of educational, research, private-sector, and government organizations, including opportunities for Federal agencies to provide in-kind support for private ocean exploration initiatives;
3. Examine the potential for new technologies—including manned and unmanned vehicles and undersea platforms—to observe and explore the oceans from surface to seafloor and recommend ways to explore the

oceans remotely using new observatories and sensors and other innovative uses of technology; and

4. Recommend mechanisms to ensure that information about newly explored areas warranting additional protection is referred to the newly established Marine Protected Area Center, and that newly discovered organisms or other resources with medicinal or commercial potential are identified for possible research and development.

In the early years of the 19th century, President Thomas Jefferson commissioned Captain Meriwether Lewis to explore the American West. What followed was the most important exploration in this country's history. As America prepares to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, we have an opportunity to set our sights on a much broader horizon. The time has come to take exploration farther west, and east, and south, to our submerged continents. In so doing, we can challenge and rekindle American's spirit of exploration, open up a whole new underwater world of possibilities, and help preserve our extraordinary marine heritage for future generations.

William J. Clinton

Statement on the Death of Frank Patterson

June 12, 2000

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of one of Ireland's greatest ambassadors of music, Frank Patterson. A world-class tenor, Frank brought the joy of classical and popular music as well as Irish culture into the hearts of millions around the world. Hillary and I will never forget hearing him perform at the White House. On behalf of the American people, we offer our sympathies to his family and friends and to the people of Ireland.

Statement on the Agreement for Redress to Victims of Nazi Slave and Forced Labor

June 12, 2000

I am very pleased that a major hurdle to agreement on the historic German initiative dealing with wrongs arising from World War II has now been overcome. I am pleased to announce that there is now agreement on the mechanism for providing enduring and all-encompassing legal peace for German companies. This is an important day for those victims of Nazi-era wrongs who have waited 50 years for justice. It is also an important day for Chancellor Schroeder and German companies. They have shown remarkable leadership in trying to rectify the wrongs committed during the Nazi era.

I hope the German Parliament, whose leaders have been involved in these negotiations, will be able to complete their work on legislation expeditiously so that payments to the victims can begin this year.

German-American relations are based on our common commitment to human dignity coming from a shared history of democracy for over 50 years. This unique German initiative, reaching out to victims of the 20th century's most horrible tragedy, will convey dramatically to the entire world Germany's commitment to justice and human rights. Our countries are entering the new millennium together determined to protect the inviolability of human dignity.

Remarks Honoring Senator Christopher J. Dodd

June 12, 2000

Thank you very much, Rosa. I want to thank you and Stan for your friendship, and I want to thank you for being graceful enough not to say that in 1980, when Chris Dodd got elected, I became the youngest ex-Governor in the history of America. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Chris and Jackie for trusting me to get up here at the podium tonight. And Senator Daschle and Senator Lieberman, thank you for what you said and for your friendship. Boy, ol' Bob Dole was

great, wasn't he? [*Laughter*] He owes me a lot, Bob Dole does. [*Laughter*] I mean, if it weren't for me, he'd be just like all us gray-haired 50-year-olds, he'd have to pay for his Viagra. [*Laughter*] We've had a lot of fun, Senator Dole and I have, in the last 3½ years. And we had a little fun before. But I appreciate his coming tonight.

And I want to thank Father Fluet for his prayer and his remarks, quoting that wonderful chapter from Matthew. It so captures the political philosophy of Chris Dodd. He did ask me, he said, "You know, Mr. President, they say I only have 3 minutes, and I need more than 3 minutes. Can I have more than 3 minutes?" I said, "You're Chris Dodd's priest. If I could do it, I'd make you a cardinal". I said, "Take whatever you want." [*Laughter*]

It's an amazing crowd of people here tonight and not all of them want to be Vice President. [*Laughter*] But a lot do. I just want to say, this really says something about Chris Dodd. In addition to Senator Lieberman and Senator Daschle and Representative DeLauro here, we either have now, or we have had—because some of them had to leave and go vote—listen to this: Senator Lautenberg from New Jersey; Senator Reed from Rhode Island; Senator Reid from Nevada; Senator Akaka from Hawaii; Senator Wellstone from Minnesota; Representatives Larson, Maloney, and Gejdenson, obviously from Connecticut; Representative Pelosi from California, who just came in; Representative Chet Edwards from Texas; Representative Sherrod Brown from Ohio. Those are just the ones I saw.

Now, what does that tell you? They want Chris Dodd's contributor list. [*Laughter*]

I want to say a couple of things very briefly. First, I would like to associate myself with every good thing that's been said about Chris Dodd tonight. I want to thank, on behalf of myself and Hillary, Chris and Jackie, for being such good friends, for the private time we've spent together—time playing golf, time just having dinner, time talking about our family, our friends, our dreams.

I want to thank Chris Dodd for making it possible for the first bill I signed as President, over 7 years ago now, to be the family

and medical leave law. He introduced me tonight to the woman who, with her child, inspired that law in his mind and heart. I like a person who believes politics is about flesh and blood, people and how they live, their hopes, their dreams, what they try to make of themselves and their children.

And you may remember that the Democrats had passed that law in the previous administration, and it had been vetoed. And I promised and made it an issue in the '92 campaign. I said, "I want to sign this bill. I want it to be the first bill I sign." And I listened to all that whining about how, you know, this is going to be a terrible burden on small business, and we were going to bankrupt the economy, and how awful it would be.

And 7½ years later, and 22-plus million jobs later, we've set records for small business formation in every year, and over 20 million of our fellow citizens—over 20 million—have been able to take a little time off when a baby was born or a parent was sick, thanks to the fact that Chris Dodd didn't give up in the face of a veto, an opposition, and all that rhetoric. It changed America.

And I believe that one of the things we ought to be doing with our prosperity now is building on the work he did with the child care tax credit and the family and medical leave law, because the idea behind it is a very simple but powerful one, which is that we ought not to ever ask an American to choose between succeeding at work and succeeding at the most important work of all in life, raising your children. Thank you, Chris, for giving us that—[inaudible].

I want to thank Secretary Daley and Secretary Richardson for coming. I don't know if they want to be Vice President or if they just want Chris to take care of them after the next election. [Laughter] But they love you, too.

I want to thank you for agreeing to become chairman of the Democratic Party after the Republicans won the Congress in '94, and everyone said we were dead, that we, generically, and me, specifically, and you didn't believe it. And you went around and gave hope and cheer and energy and fight and courage to people when all the pundits said we were history. I thank you for that. A lot of good

things have happened in this country in the last 4 years because of what you did.

And lastly, I think someone ought to remark more explicitly on one of the reasons for your remarkable blend of quality. You are to the very core of your being—and notwithstanding the fact that you know more about Latin America than anybody in the Congress—completely, irrevocably, Irish. [Laughter] Now, as an apostate Irish Protestant, whose people come from Fermanagh, just across the Republic's border into Northern Ireland, it has been my great good fortune to involve the United States in the Irish peace process.

You will never know how many times along—[applause]—thank you. You will never know how many times along the way, including sometimes calling me from the west of Ireland, where he has a place, at all hours of the day or night, Chris Dodd and I have talked about Ireland—all the things we have said in good times and sometimes the unprintable things we said in the difficult times; how many times I've called him just to sort of check, just to make sure I had it right, that I wasn't misreading the tea leaves and the incredible, emotional complexity of Irish politics.

I say that because any Irish person with any sense knows that the only things that count in life are affairs of the heart and that if you're blessed by God with a pretty good mind, it's only supposed to be used to have a better understanding of the human heart and what counts.

So for all your gifts, my friend, for all the things you've learned in life with its ups and downs, the thing which brings you to this night with your optimism intact, with your energy still high, with your wonderful wife, and this legion of friends, is that in the very best sense you were faithful to the idea of the Irish. You have followed your heart, and the world is a better place, and your friends are all richer. We love you very much, and we thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 10 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Rosa L. DeLauro, who introduced the President; Representative DeLauro's husband, Stan; Senator Dodd's wife, Jackie Marie Clegg; former Senator

Bob Dole; and Father Gregoir Fluet, who gave the invocation. The evening's program was entitled, "A Salute to 25 Years of Service—An Anniversary Gala Honoring Senator Christopher J. Dodd."

Remarks on Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

June 13, 2000

Well, Ruth, this is the most laughs we've had in this room in a long time. *[Laughter]* You can come back tomorrow and the next day and the next day. *[Laughter]*

She made the trip all the way from Idaho here. She had bad weather in Chicago last night. This is hard. She went to a lot of trouble to come here. Let's give her another hand. Let's thank her very much. *[Applause]*

I want to thank Secretary Shalala for her work on this. And Congressman Strickland, thank you, sir. And I especially want to thank Senator Max Baucus who has been on this issue of the particular impact of the prescription drug problem on rural seniors for a very long time now.

I'd also like to introduce the other Members of Congress who are here from rural America: Behind me, Congressman John Baldacci from Maine; Congressman Marion Berry from Arkansas; Congressman Leonard Boswell from Iowa; Congressman Chris John from Louisiana; Representative Paul Kanjorski from Pennsylvania; Representative David Minge from Minnesota; Representative Ciro Rodriguez from Texas; Representative John Tanner from Tennessee; Representative Jim Turner from Texas; and Representative Bud Cramer from Alabama. I think that's everybody. Let's give them a hand. They're all on our side. *[Applause]*

Patients' Bill of Rights

We're involved in two or three great health care issues here in this millennial year, and I want to talk about, obviously, the one that we came to talk about, but there was a very important decision yesterday by the Supreme Court on HMO's that I would like to just mention briefly.

We—those of us that have been pushing a strong Patients' Bill of Rights—believe Americans should have the right, even if

they're in HMO's, to see a specialist, to go to the nearest emergency room, to maintain continuity of care if they change jobs—if they're in a cancer treatment, for example, or in the process of having a baby—and they have a right to hold their health plans accountable.

But yesterday the Supreme Court—I've got this headline here that's in all the papers—"HMO Ruling Passes Debate Back to Congress." The Supreme Court ruled yesterday, I believe unanimously, what we all knew, which is that only Congress can provide to the American people in HMO's a comprehensive Patients' Bill of Rights.

Now, we've been fighting this battle a long time. And there's, obviously, I think—there's a clear majority in the House for a good bill, and we failed by only one vote in the Senate this week. We think there's a majority there, if we can ever get a clean shot. So we're going to keep working. But I just want to emphasize, the Supreme Court now has removed any doubt that this can be handled anywhere but Congress.

Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

Now, the same is true about dealing with this prescription drug issue. They have become an indispensable part of modern medicine. But more than three in five seniors in America on Medicare now lack dependable insurance coverage for the drugs that could lengthen and enrich their lives. And as the report we're releasing today shows, the situation of rural seniors is even worse.

Now, you heard Ruth talk about her situation. We know that rural seniors have a harder time getting to a doctor or a pharmacy. They're just further away. We know they're much less likely to have HMO's or other insurers willing to offer reasonably priced coverage; they don't have economies of scale. Yet, more often they are in poor health and in need of prescription drugs than their urban and suburban counterparts.

As a result, rural seniors and rural people with disabilities spend 25 percent more out-of-pocket for the prescriptions they need. They are 60 percent more likely not to get those drugs at all. You remember what Ruth said, that she knew people who could not afford to fill the prescriptions their doctors

had ordered them to take. And it is important to emphasize that, depending upon the size of the monthly bill, this could be true not only for low income seniors but also for middle income seniors.

This report could not be more timely, because we—you can't go vote yet; I'm nearly done. [*Laughter*] This is amazing to me that we're even having this debate. We've got a strong economy. We've got a big projected surplus. We know that the surplus will be revised upward by some amount in the so-called midsession review that's coming just a few days from now. Now, there is no excuse not to do this right, not to provide prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

If we were starting Medicare all over again, everybody knows we'd do it. It's just that it was created in 1965 as basically a problem for serious medical emergencies and for doctors, for hospitals. In the last 35 years there's been a sea change in what pharmaceuticals can do to keep people healthy, to keep people living, to keep people out of the hospital. So the real question is, are we going to do now what we would have done in 1965 if we'd have the tools then that we have now, and are we going to do it in the right way and provide it as an optional benefit to all the people on Medicare? That's what we think we ought to do.

And I believe it's very important that we not provide a prescription drug benefit that is some sort of faint hint at doing what needs to be done and that would wind up being nothing more than a broken promise to a lot of our seniors. I think we need a bottom-line, simple, straightforward plan that all seniors have a chance to buy into. You heard Ruth say she didn't mind paying a little bit of a co-pay, making a contribution. But people like her need access to this plan.

Now, my budget proposal would extend the lifeline of optional prescription drug coverage to all seniors by allowing them to sign up for drug coverage through Medicare. No matter where they live, how sick they are, they would pay the same premiums. The plan would use price competition, not price controls, to give seniors everywhere the best prescription prices. It would help cover the expenses of seniors who face catastrophic costs and is part of an overall plan that would

strengthen and modernize Medicare to keep it efficient and solvent, to add more years to the Trust Fund so that we can begin to absorb the baby boom generation.

There's growing bipartisan support for prescription drug action this year, and that's good. But I'm quite concerned that the proposals the House Republicans intend to put forward today won't help the Americans who need it the most. Today—and let me just describe why, and think about the story you just heard Ruth Westfall tell. Today's report on the special needs of rural seniors makes it clear that we need a benefit that's available for all older Americans. My understanding is that the latest Republican proposal relies on a private insurance model that has already failed rural Americans.

You just heard her say that she couldn't afford Medigap. And there are tons of people in this country who can't afford the Medigap insurance policy. Most people with gray hair out in this audience are now nodding their head vigorously—I hope the press has picked that up. Rural Americans, by and large, can't afford Medigap insurance. It makes no sense to use something that's failing today as our model for tomorrow, especially when we do not have to do it.

We ought to ensure that any plan benefits the people who need prescription drugs as much as it benefits the companies who sell the drugs. We have reached across party lines before. We passed the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill to allow people to take their health insurance with them when they change jobs. We passed the Children's Health Insurance Program as part of the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, which has provided millions of children in lower income working families access to health insurance. We can do this.

But there's no point in telling the American people we're doing something that turns out to be a fraud. And there's no point in pretending that only poor seniors need this help. That is not true. This is a need that's out there for people, based on the size of their medical bills as much as on the size of their monthly income check. And to say, "Well, we're going to spend a little bit of money and take care of the very poorest seniors, but anybody else we're going to put in some private insurance market that is already

a proven failure”—that the insurance companies themselves, to their credit, say will not work—is a bad mistake.

I think we ought to be helping people like Ruth Westfall. I sat there listening to her talk. She said she was proud of the life that she and her husband built. They worked hard so that they wouldn't have to depend on other people, so they wouldn't be a burden on other people. I can tell you that that story is a story that the baby boom generation wants to tell when we all get retired. And as the oldest of the baby boomers, I can tell you it's a story that we worry about all the time not being able to tell, because there are so many of us.

Now, there's no point in letting politics or ideology get in the way of the manifest need of the seniors of this country and the disabled Americans who have access to Medicare to get these prescription drugs. And we're not broke now. I've worked real hard for 7½ years to make sure I didn't leave us broke when I finished. We've got a good surplus. And if we were in deficit and trying to do this, I could understand why we would say, "Well, we can't help everybody, so we'll just help a few." But that's not the situation. We can afford to do this right. And we must not pass a plan that claims to offer something to everybody and is a false hope to most and, therefore, inadequate.

So I want to ask you all to remember this fine woman that hauled herself all the way here from Idaho. And she's still vigorous. She's still got a lot to give, and there's millions like her out there, and we owe it to them to do the right thing. And I want you to stick with these Members of Congress behind me. I thank them for being here. Let's get this done this year.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Execu-

tive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Medicare recipient Ruth Westfall, who introduced the President.

Statement on Senate Action on a National Blood Alcohol Content Standard To Combat Drunk Driving

June 13, 2000

I applaud the Senate Appropriations Committee for passing an important amendment that will help put the brakes on drunk driving across the country. I strongly support Senator Lautenberg's amendment that would help create a national standard for impaired driving of .08 blood alcohol content (BAC). This is a reasonable, commonsense standard that could save an estimated 500 lives a year, while still permitting adults to drink responsibly and moderately.

Together, we have made great progress on reducing drunk driving in America. In 1999 the number of people killed in alcohol-related crashes hit a record low. But we still lose far too many American lives to drunk drivers: one American is killed in an alcohol-related crash every 33 minutes. Over 15,700 Americans lost their lives in alcohol-related crashes in 1999 alone. We simply must do more.

Senator Lautenberg's .08 BAC legislation will help build on our efforts to keep drunk drivers off our streets. I commend Senator Lautenberg for his continued leadership in this area, and Transportation Subcommittee Chairman Shelby for including this bipartisan, life-saving amendment in the FY 2001 Transportation Appropriations bill that passed in the full Appropriations Committee today. I urge the Congress to act quickly to pass this legislation to save more lives by making .08 BAC the legal limit across the country and without further delay.

**Proclamation 7322—225th
Anniversary of the United States
Army**
June 13, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

On June 14, 1775, the Second Continental Congress authorized the enlistment of ten companies of riflemen in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia as the first units of the Continental Army. Few could have foreseen that this small band of citizen-soldiers would lay the cornerstone of freedom for our Nation and the foundation for what would become the finest army in the world.

For 225 years, in war and in peace, every generation of American soldiers has served our Nation with unwavering courage, skill, and commitment. The first soldiers of the Continental Army gave life to the United States of America in 1776. In the following century, the Army protected our new country's frontiers and preserved our Union through the terrible strife of the Civil War. In the 20th century, American soldiers fought and died in two World Wars to defend democracy and win the global struggle against fascism. And, for the last half of the 20th century, in Korea and Vietnam and throughout the dark decades of the Cold War, our Army shielded the free world from the forces of communism and ensured the triumph of democracy.

Today, the men and women of America's Army—Active, National Guard, and Reserve—continue to advance our Nation's interests around the world. Across the globe, in the face of aggression, tyranny, and despair, our soldiers have responded as allies, liberators, and humanitarians. All Americans rightly take pride in this truly American institution and its enduring strength and vitality.

In the Roosevelt Room of the White House, the flag of the United States Army stands proudly, bearing 173 streamers that mark the battles fought and won. From Lexington in 1775 to Southwest Asia in 1991, these colorful banners are a striking visual reminder of the U.S. Army's glorious history and a silent tribute to the hundreds of thou-

sands of soldiers whose sacrifices have kept our Nation free. As we mark the Army's 225th anniversary, I ask all Americans to join me in reflecting with pride and gratitude on the contributions of the loyal and courageous men and women who have served in the United States Army to preserve our liberty, uphold our values, and advance our interests.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim June 14, 2000, as the 225th Anniversary of the United States Army. I urge all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that celebrate the history, heritage, and service of the United States Army.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., June 15, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on June 16.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on the Wekiva
River and Tributaries in Florida**
June 13, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

I take pleasure in transmitting the enclosed report for the Wekiva River and several tributaries in Florida. The report and my recommendations are in response to the provisions of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Public Law 90-542, as amended. The Wekiva study was authorized by Public Law 104-311.

The National Park Service conducted the study with assistance from the Wekiva River Basin Working Group, a committee established by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to represent a broad spectrum of environmental and developmental interests. The study found that 45.5 miles of river are eligible for the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (the "System") based on free-flowing character, good

water quality, and “outstandingly remarkable” scenic, recreational, fish and wildlife, and historic/cultural values.

Almost all the land adjacent to the eligible rivers is in public ownership and managed by State and county governments for conservation purposes. The exception to this pattern is the 3.9-mile-long Seminole Creek that is in private ownership. The public land managers strongly support designation while the private landowner opposes designation of his land. Therefore, I recommend that the 41.6 miles of river abutted by public lands and as described in the enclosed report be designated a component of the System. Seminole Creek could be added if the adjacent landowner should change his mind or if this land is ever purchased by an individual or conservation agency who does not object. The tributary is not centrally located in the area proposed for designation.

I further recommend that legislation designating the Wekiva and eligible tributaries specify that on-the-ground management responsibilities remain with the existing land manager and not the Secretary of the Department of the Interior. This is in accordance with expressed State wishes and is logical. Responsibilities of the Secretary should be limited to working with State and local partners in developing a comprehensive river management plan, providing technical assistance, and reviewing effects of water resource development proposals in accordance with section 7 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

We look forward to working with the Congress to designate this worthy addition to the National Wild and Scenic River System.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
June 13, 2000.

**Remarks at a Democratic
Congressional Campaign Committee
Hispanic Caucus Reception**

June 13, 2000

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for being here. Thank you for your support for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. I want to thank Patrick Kennedy for his heroic work in raising money for all our congressional candidates. Thank you, Lucille, for your leadership.

roic work in raising money for all our congressional candidates. Thank you, Lucille, for your leadership.

Unlike Congressman Kennedy, I am going to introduce the Members of the Hispanic Caucus here because, unlike Congressman Kennedy, I need them to vote for me several more times this year. [Laughter] So since we're all standing up already, I'd like to ask them to raise their hands as I call their names. If I miss anyone, don't be bashful: Solomon Ortiz from Texas, there he is; Xavier Becerra from Los Angeles—[inaudible]—Ed Pastor from Arizona; Nydia Velazquez from New York; Bob Menendez from New Jersey, Bob; Carlos Romero-Barcelo from Puerto Rico—[inaudible]—Ruben Hinojosa from South Texas, there he is; Silvestre Reyes from El Paso, there he is; Ciro Rodriguez from Texas—Ciro, where are you?—Charlie Gonzalez from San Antonio; Grace Napolitano from California, there she is back there; and for me, at this particular moment, most important of all, because day before yesterday he had his first hole in one, Representative Joe Baca from California. And he is so shameless about it that, if you doubt it, he is carrying the authentic certificate proving that he is. [Laughter]

Ladies and gentlemen, I will be brief. Members have to go to a vote in a few minutes. I want to first of all thank all of them, because without them, nothing that we have accomplished—the Vice President and I, in our administration—would have been possible. We carried an economic plan in 1993 by one vote, which set off this economic explosion we've enjoyed in the last 8 years. It would not have been possible without the Hispanic Caucus.

And whether it was on our welfare policy, where we said: We are for work, but we're also for family; require people to work who can work but don't take the food stamps and the medical care away from the poor children—the Hispanic Caucus made it possible for us to hammer out that compromise. On crime, on education, on every single issue, they were there. And we do—we have the lowest Hispanic unemployment ever recorded, the lowest poverty rate among Hispanics in a generation, a 250 percent increase

in SBA loans to Hispanic-owned businesses, and as it's already been said, the largest number of Hispanics in high positions in our administration and in our courts in history.

Now, what I want to say to you is, elections are always about tomorrow, not about yesterday. If we did a good job, after all, it's just what you hired us to do. I remember once I was asking a guy to vote for me for reelection as Governor of Arkansas. And I said, "Well, don't you think I've done a good job?" He said, "Sure you have, but you got a paycheck every 2 weeks too, didn't you?" He said, "That's what I hired you to do." [*Laughter*]

What I want to say to you is that I think the outcome of these elections for Congress and the outcome of the election for the President are every bit as important as the elections of 1992 and 1996. I worked very hard when this country was in trouble to turn it around, to put the economy, to put the people of this country first, to, in the words of my '96 campaign, build a bridge to the 21st century.

Now the great test the American people face is, what is it we intend to do with our good fortune, with this moment of possibility? I think we ought to use it to meet the big challenges of the country. I think we ought to use it to keep paying down the debt, to keep the prosperity going but to extend the prosperity to people and places who have been left behind. I think we ought to give tax incentives to investors who invest in the poor areas of America the same incentives we give them to invest in poor areas in Africa and Asia and Latin America. I think that's important. I think we ought to make after-school care and preschool universal for all of our children who need it. I think we ought to have—I think we ought to modernize our schools and ensure they're all hooked up to the Internet. I think we ought to provide more options for working families to get health care. We ought to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. We ought to allow working families whose children are in our Children's Health Insurance Program to buy into it themselves. We ought to have middle class tax relief for long-term care, for child care, and to help all families pay for a college edu-

cation. I think we ought to take on these big challenges.

And while it is now fashionable for both parties to court the Hispanic vote—indeed, both candidates speak Spanish and love to do it—I hope very much that I am the last President in American history who can't speak Spanish. I think from now on everyone will have to speak Spanish. [*Laughter*] And within a year or 2, when I get a little private time, I may be able to speak Spanish, too. I'm going to work on it. [*Laughter*]

But what I want to say to you is, there is a difference. There is a difference in the Congress, and there is a difference in the race for the White House. One party supports the Patients' Bill of Rights, and the other opposes it. One party is for raising the minimum wage, and the other is not. One party is trying to expand health insurance coverage to poor working families, and the other has not endorsed it. One party wants a big tax cut that will keep us from paying down the debt; the other party—ours—we want an affordable, middle class tax cut that will enable us to continue to pay down the debt and invest in the education and health care and future of our children.

We all say that we favor broad participation, but I'll just give you one example. I named an Hispanic lawyer from El Paso, named Enrique Moreno, to the Federal Court of Appeals. He graduated summa cum laude from his university. He graduated near the top of his class in law school. A panel of State judges in Texas said he was one of the three best lawyers in his part of the State. He got the highest rating from the American Bar Association. But the two Republican judges from Texas—Senators from Texas—said he wasn't qualified to sit on the Court of Appeals. And I haven't heard a peep, I might add, out of any of the other elected Republicans in Texas about this.

So I say to you, there's a difference. There is a difference. And sometimes it can be as stern a test of a country's character and judgment, how it handles its prosperity as how it handles its adversity. After all, when the American people took a chance on me in 1992, we had our backs to the wall; we were in trouble. And people were willing to let us make a few changes. Now, the danger is

that people will think, “Oh well, this economy has been so good, so long, nobody can mess it up”—[*laughter*]—or that everybody seems so nice, nobody can do anything too bad. There is a difference. These people should be in the majority in the House. We should hold the White House. We should win the Senate.

And you can go and tell people, “Look, it’s not as if they’re taking a big chance. You’ve got evidence now. We were divided all the way along on economic policy, on crime policy, on welfare policy, on education policy, on environmental policy. And the evidence is in. And the ideas are out there. The best days of this country are still ahead. The best days for Hispanic America are still ahead. But we have got to make the right choices.”

You made a good investment coming here tonight, and I want you now to make your investment good by taking every opportunity, every day, between now and November, to make the same arguments, in your own way, I made to you tonight.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 7:50 p.m. in the Chinese Room at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard.

Remarks at a Reception for Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton

June 13, 2000

Thank you. Well, if I had any sense, I wouldn’t say a word. [*Laughter*] Thank you.

Let me say, first of all, I want to thank Vernon and Ann for once again proving one of their most endearing and enduring virtues: They stick with their friends. And Eleanor is their friend. We have all been friends a long time, and Hillary and I have known Vernon for a long time. When I was a 32-year-old Governor, I went to Vernon Jordan’s Urban League banquet speech in Little Rock, stayed up half the night talking to him. Hillary had already known him for years. In fact, she never lets me forget. [*Laughter*]

And I would be less charitable, however, than Eleanor was. I think Ann actually saved Vernon’s life. [*Laughter*] I was delighted

when they got married because I needed him around for the rest of my life. [*Laughter*] And they have been so wonderful to all of us who are their friends, and I thank them for doing this.

Mr. Mayor, I’m glad to see you. And Councilwoman, I’m glad to see you. And Secretary Herman, I’m glad to see you. Secretary Herman and Eleanor and I, we sort of, in our different ways, tried to help the administration of Jimmy Carter. So we go back a long, long time.

I just want to say a few words tonight about Washington. First of all, I’m very proud of our Mayor, who was, in his previous life, a member of my administration. I have always loved Washington. You know, I’ve had a lot of homes in my life. I grew up in Arkansas, and I went to law school in Connecticut. Everybody knows now I’ve got a home in New York, which I’m very proud of. It’s getting better every day. [*Laughter*] Fixing a 111-year-old farmhouse is almost as challenging as winning a Senate seat. [*Laughter*] But I hope and pray we’ll be successful at both.

But when I was a young man, I went to college in Washington. And I worked on the Hill every day. I lived in the District all 4 years I was in college. I love this city. I saw it burn after Dr. King was killed. I used to drive up and down those avenues, and I saw those empty storefronts. You know, I didn’t know then, obviously, I would ever be President. Eleanor says she knew a long time ago. I really think when I announced for President my mother was the only person who thought I could win. [*Laughter*]

But I always promised myself, if I could ever do anything for this city I would, because it was plainly, in some ways, the most beautiful capital in the entire world. It was full of people from all over the world. It had a rich and textured history that deserved to be nourished, a lot of things people don’t even know about. You know, we have a national historic site here in Anacostia that is Frederick Douglass’ home, that he lived in from after the Civil War until he died, that I urge all of you to go see, if you haven’t. I’ll flak for the National Park Service a little.

So when I became President, before I was inaugurated, I took a walk down Georgia Avenue. And I talked to the merchants there,

and I talked to the people on the street. I was always looking for things I could do. Eleanor and I were joking today—she went jogging in a campaign event for me in 1992. In the pouring rain, we were running up Pennsylvania Avenue together. I never will forget that. And because she's been where she's been, it's been possible for me, I think, to be a pretty good friend and a pretty good citizen of Washington, DC. But if she hadn't been there, if she didn't have the enormous credibility she has in the Congress, among both Republicans and Democrats, and if she didn't have an idea a minute—[*laughter*]—then all these things that I have been able to do, I could not have done. Someone could write a whole chapter on my service as President to Washington, DC, in two words: Yes, Eleanor. [*Laughter*] And if it were to be four words, it would have to be: Yes, Eleanor; yes, Eleanor. [*Laughter*]

We had a great time together, and it's been a joy. Now we've got this great Mayor who is inspiring so much confidence and broadening the base of support for the city, and there's so much more to be done. But I would hope that every American would want the United States Congress and the private sector and everybody else to do whatever we can for Washington. It ought to be the greatest city in America. It ought to be the greatest capital in the world. It's full of wonderful people and wonderful neighborhoods and wonderful possibilities, and we have really just begun to do what we ought to do.

I hope someday that she'll actually have a real vote in the Congress, too. And that we'll have representation in the other House of the Congress. I hope that will happen.

But I just want all of you to know that I'm grateful to you for helping her, but I know, I think I know that your presence here means you're also committed to helping make DC an even greater city, an even better place to live, an even more admirable National Capital. And believe me, for those of you who were here, like me, in the early and mid-sixties, it's stunning, the difference. But if you know the city, if you know all its neighborhoods, if you know all its schools, if you know every little nook and cranny of it, you know we've only scratched the surface of

what we can do to make this the city it ought to be.

I keep telling the American people, as I travel around the country now, that in so many ways the election of 2000 is as important as the elections of '92 and '96, and in some ways, a sterner test of our judgment and character. Because when I got elected, the country was against a wall, and it didn't take too much for them to take a chance on me. You remember me; President Bush referred to me as the Governor of a small southern State. [*Laughter*] And I was so dumb, I thought it was a compliment. [*Laughter*] And I still do. [*Laughter*]

But anyway, we knew we had to do some things that were different. We knew we had to take a chance. We knew we had to kind of break out of the mold of the way business was conducted in the city. But now the test is, what is it that we propose as a nation to do with this prosperity of ours? Anybody that's over 30 years old has got sense enough to know that nothing goes on forever. And anybody over 30 years old can remember at least one time in your life when you made a mistake, not because things were so bad but because things were so good you thought there were no consequences to the failure to concentrate.

So I hope one of the things that we will think about—those of us in this room, at least—in this election season, is how important it is to use this moment to finish the job for Washington, DC, and to make it the greatest city of any national capital in the world. We can do this. We have the local leadership now. We have the idea machine—[*laughter*]—beloved of all Members of Congress. If as many Republicans liked me as liked her, they'd repeal the 22d amendment. [*Laughter*]

We can do this. But remember, you don't want to be sitting around in somebody's living room 10 years from now and thinking, "Gosh, I wish I had done this, that, or the other thing for Washington." So let's make sure we truly honor Eleanor by having no regrets about how we use this magic moment.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Vernon and Ann Jordan; Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; and Linda W. Cropp, chair, Council of the District of Columbia.

Remarks on Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage and an Exchange With Reporters

June 14, 2000

The President. Good afternoon. Senator Daschle, Representative Gephardt, Secretary Shalala, and I have just met with these leaders of organizations representing America's seniors, people with disabilities, and community pharmacists. We spoke about the great need for Congress to give all Medicare beneficiaries an affordable prescription drug option. We spoke about the merits and the shortfalls of new legislative proposals on prescription drugs now emerging in the House.

Funding for Enforcement of Gun Laws

Before I go into the details of the discussions this morning, I want to briefly touch on another pressing priority before the House, funding for enforcement of our gun laws.

For years, the Republican leadership has emphasized the importance of enforcing our gun laws as a reason for opposing other commonsense gun safety measures. Yet they have failed so far to put their money where their words are. Today a House appropriations committee appears to be on the verge of approving a bill that absolutely guts our administration's proposal for the largest gun enforcement initiative in history.

Incomprehensible though it may be, their bill fails to provide any funding at all to hire 1,000 new State and local gun prosecutors to help take gun criminals out of our communities and put them behind bars. It undermines our efforts to replicate the success of Richmond's Project Exile, another key initiative the Republicans have always said they support. And it fails to provide funding to expand research and development of smart gun technology.

I ask the Republican leadership to reverse the current course, to live up to the rhetoric,

to fully fund the national gun enforcement initiative.

Of course, no society can prevent every tragedy or outrage, but we can save lives with a combination of new commonsense gun laws and enhanced enforcement of the laws already on the books. We're going to have to do this in a bipartisan manner, if it's going to get done, and to recognize the American people want both strong enforcement and strong prevention.

Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

Now, back to prescription drugs. The American people here have also made their intentions clear. Our seniors want affordable, dependable coverage for the prescription medications that lengthen their lives and improve its quality. That's the message we heard yesterday from Ruth Westfall, a retired teacher from rural Idaho, the message I heard from leaders I met with a few moments ago. That's certainly what Senator Daschle and Republican Gephardt are hearing from their constituents and what they're fighting hard for up on the Hill.

All the leaders here today recognize that adding a voluntary prescription drug benefit is not just the right thing to do; medically speaking, it's the smart thing to do. No one creating the Medicare program today would think of doing so without prescription drug coverage. Prescription drugs now can accomplish what once could be done only with surgery.

That's why we have proposed the comprehensive plan to provide a prescription drug benefit that is optional and accessible to all our seniors; a plan that ensures that all older Americans, no matter where they live or how sick they are, will pay the same affordable premiums; a plan that uses price competition, not price controls, to guarantee that seniors will get the best prices; a plan that would cover catastrophic drug costs, as well as regular drug bills; a plan that is part of an overall effort to strengthen and modernize Medicare, so we won't have to ask our children to shoulder the burden when the baby boomers retire.

There is growing bipartisan support for prescription drug action this year, and that's good. But the leaders and advocates here

today are still concerned that the proposals the House Republicans are putting forward later this week will not ensure that all seniors have an affordable prescription drug option.

We have grave concerns because the Republican plan builds on the already flawed private Medigap insurance market. As recently as yesterday, the insurance industry reiterated its belief that a Medigap insurance model simply will not work for prescription drug coverage—the insurance industry, itself, has said this repeatedly—and that private insurers will not willingly participate in such a program. Even if some private insurers do participate, the premiums inevitably will be higher than those under a Medicare drug plan. Yesterday you heard Ruth Westfall say what I have heard countless seniors say, that they can't afford the Medigap coverage that presently is offered.

We have grave concerns because the Republican plan relies on a trickle-down scheme that would provide a subsidy for insurers and not a single dollar of direct premium assistance for middle class seniors. We have grave concerns because the so-called choice model offered by the Republicans breaks up the pooled power of seniors to purchase drugs at the most affordable prices, forcing insurers to constrain costs by restricting seniors' choice of drugs and choice of pharmacies.

Republicans and Democrats alike say they support an affordable drug benefit for our seniors. But let's be clear. A private insurance model simply cannot guarantee affordable coverage for all. To make the promise of affordable coverage real for all older Americans, there must be a true Medicare drug option.

If the proposal the Republicans release later this week gives all seniors the ability to choose an affordable, defined, fee-for-service drug benefit under Medicare, even if it's just one of several options, that could certainly serve as a foundation for a bipartisan agreement on this issue. But anything less would be an empty promise.

Working together, reaching across the aisle, we can use this time of unparalleled prosperity to do the right thing by our seniors. We should do it this year for their sake and for the sake of the future of Medicare.

Now, I would like to introduce Martha McStein, the incoming chair of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations, the president of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare. Ms. McStein was Acting Commissioner of the Social Security Administration during the Reagan administration, after a very distinguished 39-year career with the agency. In 1965 she served as one of the first regional administrators of the Nation's then new Medicare program. Today she's here to speak about why it is so important that we modernize Medicare with an affordable prescription drug benefit for all.

Martha.

[At this point, Ms. McStein, Representative Richard A. Gephardt, and Senator Tom Daschle made brief remarks.]

Los Alamos National Laboratory

Q. Mr. President, let me ask you about Los Alamos, sir. Are you satisfied with the explanations you've had to date about the missing computer disks?

The President. First of all, this is a very serious issue, and I think what we have to do is to get an answer. I'm gratified that Senator Baker and former House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Hamilton are going to look into this. The FBI is looking into it. And I think it's very important that it be treated as a serious matter and that the investigation continue.

Trofimoff Espionage Case

Q. Mr. President, what have you been told about this arrest in Florida today in this new espionage case and the extent of the damage alleged to U.S. national security interests?

The President. Nothing yet.

Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

Q. Mr. President, on prescription drugs, you announced a couple weeks ago, with Mr. Hastert, an urban renewal bill, that you said had worked out in a very bipartisan manner. Have you made any effort to address prescription drugs in a bipartisan manner to bring to the table?

The President. Sure. Sure. And I've talked to them, and I still have some hope we can do it. But so far, their philosophically

opposed, apparently, to a program that's run through Medicare, number one, and number two, that is made available to all seniors. And the problem is, if you only make it available to seniors below a certain income ceiling, like 150 percent of poverty, you leave about half the seniors out who really need it, number one. And number two, as I said, the Medigap programs that are out there now are not particularly affected. There are lots of Americans that cannot afford the private Medigap insurance that's offered now.

So if you go back and look at my statement carefully, I tried to offer another olive branch. I said, if we would have—if they want to offer a number of options to people, and one of those options is a true Medicare program that is available at the same price to all seniors, then we could talk and we could do some business. And I still hope we can have a compromise. I don't want to be uncompromising but neither do I want to hold down a false hope to the seniors. I don't want to tell them we're doing something when we're not doing it.

So part of this is perhaps a philosophical difference, but what I suggested in my remarks is that maybe we could come up with an agreement where they let our plan be available, and we let some other plans be available, and we just see which one worked better.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, you're meeting tomorrow with Chairman Arafat. Has anything in the talks this week led you to believe that the Israelis and Palestinians may be closer to a Camp-David-style summit, and will that be on the agenda tomorrow?

The President. Well, obviously, I've never ruled that out, but I think we need to get the parties a little closer before we can go there. We don't have a lot of time. We're down to all the hard issues now, and we're working on it. I'm hopeful, but I don't want to hold out false hopes. I don't know that I can tell you anything other than that I think we are making steady progress. We've seen the narrowing of some of the gaps, but I don't know that we're ready to have the final meeting yet.

Los Alamos National Laboratory

Q. One more on Los Alamos. Are you still confident in Secretary Richardson's leadership in the Energy Department?

The President. Yes. I think since the review was done before the general security problems, that the Energy Department has done a lot to improve the overall procedures. But we don't have the answers we need on this issue. This is a very serious issue, and that's why the FBI's looking into it and why I have asked Senator Baker and Representative Hamilton to look into it, as well. I think they're both widely respected as experts in the area and also as being fair-minded.

So I think we'll get some more indications there. We've just got to see this through. It's a serious matter, and I don't think any of us need to be characterizing anything until we know what happened.

Korean Summit

Q. What did you think of the Korean summit, sir?

The President. I'm very, very pleased. You know, for years—as long as I've been here, anyway—I've tried to get the North Koreans to speak with the South Koreans, without an intermediary, including the United States. So I'm very pleased by this, and I think the communique is hopeful.

Now, they've got a lot of work to do, and it's just a first step, but it's clearly a move in the right direction. And everyone else in the world should be encouraged by this. This is a good thing.

Q. [Inaudible]—think it's significant that the two heads —

Q. Does this arrest in Moscow, sir, raise questions about Mr. Putin and his commitment to press freedom?

The President. Excuse me, I'm sorry. On that, I think we can't know yet. They talked about family reunifications. That's a huge first step. That's a good thing.

Now, go ahead.

Freedom of the Press in Russia

Q. The arrest in Moscow, sir, of the media critic of Mr. Putin—does that raise questions in your mind about his commitment to press freedoms?

The President. Well, I made a very strong statement when I was in Moscow about this, and I think, in a way, if anybody ought to have credibility to defend the freedom of the press, I should. [Laughter] So I did, and I will continue to.

If there is some other reason for the arrest—I don't know what the facts are, I don't think we necessarily know all the facts, but I do not believe people should be arrested solely because of what they say in exercising their role as members of the press. I don't believe that. And I think the United States has to take a very firm position on that. I do not believe democracy is weakened by dissent, even if it is unfair and sometimes even if it's false, because I think in the end, if the debate is open, the people usually get it right. That's why our democracy is still around here after over 200 years.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Medicare recipient Ruth Westfall; former Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr., and former Representative Lee H. Hamilton, appointed to lead a Presidential Commission to investigate possible security breaches at the Los Alamos National Laboratory; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. A reporter referred to Col. George Trofimoff, USA (Ret.), who was arrested in Florida on June 14 and charged with espionage.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Electronic Signatures Legislation

June 14, 2000

I am pleased that the House today adopted the electronic signatures conference report by an overwhelming vote. I expect similar support in the Senate for this bipartisan agreement and look forward to signing this key legislation into law.

This historic legislation will ensure that our consumer protections apply when Americans do business on-line. It will encourage the information technology revolution that has helped lower inflation, raise productivity, and spur new research and development. By marrying one of our oldest values—our com-

mitment to consumer protection—with the newest technologies, we can achieve the full measure of the benefits that E-commerce has to offer. My congratulations to the Democratic and Republican leaders of the conference committee who worked together to forge this landmark legislation.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Legislation

June 14, 2000

Today the House of Representatives narrowly passed on a partisan vote the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and related agencies appropriations bill. This legislation fails to address critical needs of the American people and short changes our efforts to help our students achieve higher standards in the classroom.

The House bill invests too little in our schools and demands too little from them. It fails to strengthen accountability and turn around failing schools, reduce class size, provide funds for emergency repairs and renovating aging schools, sufficiently expand after-school opportunities, help prepare low income students for college through GEAR UP, and programs to improve teacher quality, and help bridge the digital divide. It underfunds child care and fails to adequately invest in Head Start. This bill also cuts funding for public health priorities, including mental health and substance abuse services, family planning, health care access for the uninsured, nursing home quality, family caregiver support, and infectious diseases.

In addition, the bill makes deep cuts in worker training programs and cuts programs that ensure safe and healthy workplaces, enforce domestic labor laws, and help address child labor abuses at home and abroad. Regrettably, the bill also includes language prohibiting the Department of Labor from finalizing its standard to protect the Nation's workers from ergonomic injuries.

A bill that fails to provide key resources for education, child care, worker training, and other priorities is unacceptable. If it

were presented to me in its current form, I would veto it. I continue to hope my administration can work with Congress on a bipartisan basis to develop a bill that strengthens our country's education system, adequately funds public health priorities, addresses the needs of our Nation's workers, and provides for other important national priorities.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on
Proliferation of Weapons
of Mass Destruction**

June 14, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

Enclosed is a report to the Congress on Executive Order 12938, as required by section 204 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1703(c)) and section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1641(c)).

William J. Clinton

The White House,
June 14, 2000.

**Message to the Congress on
Continuation of the National
Emergency With Respect to the
Lapse of the Export Administration
Act of 1979**

June 14, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 204 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1703(c)) and section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1641(c)), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency declared by Executive Order 12924 of August 19, 1994, to deal with the threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States caused by the lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
June 14, 2000.

**Remarks Prior to Discussions With
Chairman Yasser Arafat of the
Palestinian Authority and an
Exchange With Reporters**

June 15, 2000

Middle East Peace Process

The President. Good morning, everyone. I'm delighted to have Chairman Arafat and his team back here again, and I'm looking forward to our conversation.

Q. Do you fear that the Palestinian track is in danger of collapse, Mr. President?

The President. No, I think it's an important moment, and we just have to keep working on it.

Q. Mr. President, are you going to put any pressure on the Palestinians concerning the third redeployment, which is supposed to happen on the 23d of this month?

The President. What I would like to do today is just get on to our business and our conversation and not say very much. If we're going to make peace, we're going to have to deal with the difficult issues, and the less we say now, the better, I think.

Q. Mr. President, President Arafat was reported to be very upset with the way the Israelis are handling the negotiation. What is your assessment now, especially as time is running out before the deadline of September 13th?

The President. I don't think I should characterize what's going on. I can only tell you that I want to finish the job, and I'd like to see it finished on time.

NOTE: The exchange began at 9:44 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

**Remarks at the White House
Strategy Session on Improving
Hispanic Student Achievement**

June 15, 2000

Thank you very much, and good afternoon. I have received a good report on what you have done so far, and I want to get right into our program, but I would like to make a few remarks first. I'd like to thank Governor

Glendening and Senator Bingaman and Congressman Hinojosa and Guillermo Linares and Secretary Riley for joining us, along with our other panel members.

And I'd like to thank Congressman Joe Baca, Carlos Romero-Barcello for being here. I think Congressman Reyes from Texas is on the way. And I want to welcome Mayor Beverly O'Neill from Long Beach, and especially Lieutenant Governor of California Cruz Bustamante, who is here. And I'd like to thank Maria Echaveste and Mickey Ibarra from the White House for the work they have done on this, along with all the others who have worked so hard.

This is very important to me. One of the things that I have learned traveling America is just how diverse Hispanic America is, something that a lot of Americans don't really know yet. I think there is a common core of values around family and community and work and faith, but Hispanic America is growing more diverse every day with different challenges and, unfortunately, still different opportunities. There are still a lot of gaps that we all want to close. Most of them are narrowing, but we've still got a lot of work to do.

Last August the First Lady hosted the first-ever White House Conference on Hispanic Children and Youth. And today we're following up on that Conference by setting forth specific goals and an agenda for closing the student achievement gap over the next 10 years in ways that we can all be held accountable for.

The first step to closing that gap is to believe, as I do, that high expectations are for all students. I believe intelligence is equally distributed throughout the world, but opportunity is not. And the same is true within our own country.

For over 7 years now, we've pushed hard for higher standards, for more choice, for greater accountability, and for more support for children and teachers and parents and schools who need it. We have hired nearly 30,000 new, highly trained teachers now, on the way to our goal of 100,000 more teachers to lower class sizes in the early grades. We've connected about three-quarters of our classrooms to the Internet; that's up from 3 percent in 1994, when we started in northern

California, the Vice President and I did, with our first NetDay.

We've made it possible for over 90 percent of our schools in very low income areas to have at least one Internet connection because of the E-rate program that the Vice President and I fought very hard for in the Telecommunications Act in 1996. And we have more than doubled college aid in the last 7 years, the biggest expansion since the GI bill 50 years ago. In all these areas, I actually believe we have more to do.

We also, as all of you know, put in place a Hispanic Education Action Plan that includes, this year, a \$436 million increase for programs to improve Latino student outcomes. And I want to double that investment. This strategy of investing more and demanding more is working. Test scores are up across the country; more students than ever are going to college. If we just keep it up, we'll really take this country and all its children where we want to go.

Unfortunately, that progress is threatened by the education bill that the House Committee passed yesterday, or that the House passed yesterday. I think it demands too little accountability, and I know it puts in too few resources. It, in my judgment, underinvests in everything from after-school programs, which we have taken from \$1 million to over \$400 million in just a 3½ years. And if that bill were to come to my desk, I would have to veto it. But I hope we can work with Congress on a bipartisan education bill. We've had some success in recent years, and I am confident we will this year.

I'd like to talk, just a moment, about what many of you already know, which is that Hispanic students are sharing in this academic success, but still, too many are lagging behind in ways that I find deeply troubling. Today I'm releasing a study by my Council of Economic Advisers, which shows that the average educational level of native-born Hispanics has increased substantially over the last several decades, and the gap between Hispanics and whites has declined.

Compared to 1993, Hispanic students are scoring higher on math tests; greater percentages are completing high school, graduating from college, and getting advanced degrees. However, there's some bad news in

this report, because the need for education is growing even faster. For example, since 1993, the percentage of Hispanics with 4 or more years of college has increased but only by about 2 percent. Over the next decade, the number of jobs requiring at least 4 years of college will more than double.

The study shows that Hispanics, who represent 11 percent of our work force, hold down just 4 percent of the jobs in information technology, jobs that pay much more than average in the area where jobs are growing most rapidly. Every American should be concerned about that gap. When the fastest growing demographic group in our country is underrepresented in the fastest growing employment sector, it means less opportunity and a violation of the values that we all share. It also means that, sooner or later, our economy will have a shortage of highly skilled workers where we really need them.

One other finding in the report bears mentioning because it will inform the debate we're going to have today. The problem is not that Hispanics are not choosing careers in key industries like information technology. In fact, according to the report, Hispanics who graduate from college enter the information technology industry at about the same rate as non-Hispanics and earn about as much. The problem, therefore, quite simply, is that not enough Hispanics are getting college degrees. That can be remedied only by raising the educational achievements of Hispanic students in schools, beginning in preschool years, continuing into adulthood, and by making sure that no person is ever denied access to college because of cost.

We know that the achievement levels can be raised. The question is whether we have the will to do what we know works. If we're going to set high expectations of students, we must have high expectations of ourselves to do what it takes to make sure all of our students can make the grade.

We know that we can make college more accessible. That's what the HOPE scholarships do, the Direct Student Loan Program, the lifetime learning tax credit. But I think we ought to do more. I have got a proposal before Congress to give up to \$10,000 of tuition tax-deductible status every year and to do it at a 28 percent income tax rate, even

for people in the 15 percent income tax bracket, which is a very, very important proposal. And it could make it possible for even more of our young people to go to college and for more of our families to afford it.

So today, we know what we have to do, and we know we can do it. And what I think is always helpful is to translate what we wish to do into specific goals. So I think we ought to adopt five specific goals to close the Hispanic student achievement gap over the next 10 years.

First, let's make sure that in 10 years, young Latino children are enrolled in quality early childhood programs at the same rate as other Americans. Second, let's make sure that in 10 years, every Hispanic student graduating from high school will have demonstrable proficiency in English. Third, let's make sure that in 10 years, there is no gap in test scores and other assessments between Hispanic students and their peers. Fourth, let's make sure in 10 years, 90 percent of Latino students complete high school. And fifth, let's make sure that over the next decade, the percentage of Hispanic students who earn college degrees will double what it is today.

Now, these goals are specific and ambitious but clearly achievable. If we are serious, we have to do something about meeting them. This morning the Secretary of Education released the first of what will be annual reports measuring progress in Hispanic student achievement. We also need an entity outside electoral politics to keep a national spotlight on these goals, because they should be the Nation's goals, without regard to party.

Today I'm happy to announce the creation of such an entity: the 2010 Alliance, a partnership among a wide variety of Hispanic organizations, including La Raza and the National Association for Bilingual Education and corporate and non-profit groups, from the Ford, Irvine, Kellogg, and Hazen Foundations, to AT&T, GM, Univision, and State Farm.

The alliance will be, as they say, in your face. [*Laughter*] It is designed to remind the Nation of these goals and to spur commitments, specific ones, at every level of government and the private sector to help to meet

them. I'm happy that a number of organizations have already committed to taking specific steps to help achieve the goals.

The Discovery Channel will publicize the goals in public service announcements to run on its Discovery and Espanol Network. The educational software firm, Lightspan, is teaming up with the Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide special software and Internet access for computers in HUD neighborhood centers in Hispanic communities. Many other organizations, from the American Library Association to the Hispanic Radio Network, also are contributing.

Closing this achievement gap is a challenge that may seem daunting now, but it will seem inevitable once we do it. And when we do it, if we work hard, stay together, and stay focused on the goal, America will be a better, stronger place in the 21st century.

Thank you very much.

I'd like now to introduce Governor Parris Glendening of Maryland, who increased his State's investment in education by \$600 million and doubled funds to build and modernize schools in his first term in office. In more ways than I can count right now, since he's been Governor, Maryland has been on the forefront of change in our Nation. And I wish every State would follow Maryland's lead.

Governor.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:48 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Guillermo Linares, Chairman, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

Statement on the Korean Summit

June 15, 2000

The historic summit between President Kim Dae-jung and Chairman Kim Chong-il marks an initial, hopeful step toward peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. I welcome the agreements the two leaders reached on humanitarian and economic cooperation and on a future summit in Seoul, and hope that both sides will continue down this promising path. I applaud Kim Dae-jung's persistence and wisdom as he has

moved, soberly and realistically, to improve relations with the North. President Kim and I have consulted very closely on this issue, and I look forward to supporting his future initiatives toward lasting peace and full reconciliation.

Statement on Senate Action on a National Blood Alcohol Content Standard To Combat Drunk Driving

June 15, 2000

Today the Senate took an important step forward to keep drunk drivers off our Nation's streets. I congratulate the Senate for including a lifesaving measure championed by Senators Lautenberg and Shelby to set a national standard for impaired driving at .08 blood alcohol content (BAC) in the Transportation appropriations bill that passed today. This reasonable standard will save hundreds of lives and prevent countless injuries each year—and it should be put in place across the country without further delay. I strongly urge the Congress to pass a final Transportation spending bill that includes this important initiative. Working together, we can help put the brakes on drunk drivers and make our streets safer for Americans across the Nation.

Remarks to United States Dream Academy Participants

June 15, 2000

The President. Thank you. Well, good afternoon.

Audience members. Good afternoon.

The President. First, I want to say, Principal Jones, thank you for having us here. My great friend Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton—there is not a better Member of Congress than Eleanor Holmes Norton, you should be very proud of her.

I thank all the representatives of the DC government that are here. Can you hear me? Is this on?

Audience members. Yes.

The President. No, it's not on, but you can hear me anyway? [Laughter] Whoever

controls this, turn it up! [*Laughter*] Turn the sound up. That's a little better.

Let me say a special word of appreciation to my long-time friend Wintley Phipps. You heard the story of how I met him. I'm glad his family is here today. And I guess you're all his family, in a way. But when I met him in Alabama a long time ago, he may not have known who I was, but once I heard him sing and I saw the expression on his face, I knew I'd never forget him again for the rest of my life.

I want to thank the U.S. Dream Academy and all of you who are its partners; a special word of appreciation to the staff, the students, the teachers at the Ferebee Hope Community Services Center and Elementary School. I thank you all for helping these children through this wonderful program to realize their dreams and their God-given potential.

Eleanor Roosevelt once said this: "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." We are here today because Wintley Phipps believed in the beauty of his dream, believed that all children, given the right support, could realize their dream. That's why he founded the Dream Academy, to give children who have fallen behind a chance to catch up and soar ahead and to pay special attention to children whose parents were incarcerated.

You know, I used to tell people all the time, when they said to me when I was a Governor, "Why are you for all these education programs in the prisons and all these training programs and all these treatment programs?" And I said, "Well, first of all, 90 percent of those folks are going to get out some day, and we want them to be good citizens. And secondly, if they'd had these things in the first place, a lot of them wouldn't be in there."

And so I want to thank the people associated with this Academy for helping give nearly three-quarters of the students at Ferebee a chance to live their dreams. I want to thank the parents who are involved. I want to thank everybody who give these children the learning environment, the personal attention, the academic tools they need. I want to thank you for teaching not only academic subjects

but character-building and the importance of maintaining good health.

I worry about how many kids in our schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods never get a chance just to learn about the basics of good health. I've seen all these physical education programs and music programs and art programs cut out of our schools over the last decade because of financial problems they've seen, and I thank you for giving these kids a whole education and a chance to be whole people.

And of course, I want to say a special word of thanks for having an Internet-based curriculum. These children need to be part of the information society. I have seen the power of the Internet in the poorest villages of Africa and India and Latin America. I have talked to children all over the world on the Internet, and no child in America should be without its blessing.

You know, the entire Encyclopedia Britannica is now on the Internet. In schools in the poorest parts of this country, schools where they have no building as nice as this one, if they have an Internet connection and a printer, they can have textbooks as good as anyone else, thanks to the miracles of modern technology. These children deserve it, and all of the children of America deserve it. And so I thank you.

Now, what I would like to say, especially for the benefit of the members of the press who are here covering this, is that this is not just a feel-good program. It works. In the last year, math and reading scores are up sharply. Suspensions are down. Class attendance is up, which shows that more and more of these young people understand the importance of going to school, staying in school, and doing well in school. This works.

I thank Wintley for pointing out that this program receives funding from the Department of Labor. And I'm happy to report that another \$200,000 will be granted over the next 2 years because of what you're doing. I know you've gotten money from energy companies, from the NFL, from other places, and I want to thank all the people who have given you private money, as well.

I think we ought to be thinking about how we can make sure these kinds of opportunities are available to all of our children. I think

that means that, as Wintley goes national, the National Government ought to go with him and help him all across the country. But it also means that we have to continue our efforts for smaller classes, for better school buildings, to make sure all our classrooms are hooked up to the Internet, to make sure every child who needs it has access to an after-school or a summer school program, to make sure that all kids have access to pre-school programs, to make sure every low performing school has the resources it needs to turn around. Because I believe that intelligence is evenly distributed throughout the human race, opportunity is not, and we need to give them a chance to do it.

I believe every child from a disadvantaged neighborhood should have access to a mentor who can say to that child, "Look, if you take these courses and do this well, you can go to college. Here's the proof of it. Here's the money. Here's the scholarships. Here's the loan. Here's the aid." We need to make sure that all kids can do it, and then when they're of age, we need to make sure the doors of college are open to all of our people. Money should never keep anybody from going to school.

One of the things that I'm proudest of is that since I've been President, we've had the biggest expansion of college aid since the GI bill 50 years ago. And if we get the provision passed that I've asked this Congress to adopt, we'll allow every family to deduct up to \$10,000 of college tuition from their income tax every year, and that will be good.

One other thing I'd like to say—I'm sure you never have it here—but I've noticed in my own home that the children sometimes know more than the adults, even the teachers, about the technology. I'm sure you've never seen that here. *[Laughter]* But we just have provided over \$120 million to make sure that nearly 600,000 teachers are properly trained to make the most of this Internet technology, because I think that's important.

What I came here today to say is this: Number one, I am grateful to God that somehow 10 years ago I ran into Wintley Phipps, who didn't know who I was, but I determined I'd never forget who he was; number two, I am grateful to him and to all of you who have done the U.S. Dream Acad-

emy; number three, I want to support you, but I believe what you do for these children, somebody should do for every child in the United States.

And finally, again, I want to say to the American people through our friends in the press, this is not just a feel-good program; this works. Every person who ever amounted to anything in life did so with a dream. We need to make all of our kids believe they can dream and that their dreams are just as worthy as anybody else's dreams and that, if they're willing to work at it, their dreams are just as possible as anyone else's dreams.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:15 p.m. in Mitchell Hall Auditorium at Ferebee Hope Elementary School. In his remarks, he referred to Lester Jones, principal, Ferebee Hope Elementary School; and gospel singer Wintley Phipps, founder and director, United States Dream Academy, a pilot program designed to help children of imprisoned parents acquire basic learning skills, incorporating mentoring and on-line academic support. The President also referred to NFL, the National Football League.

Remarks at a Reception for Mayor Anthony A. Williams of the District of Columbia

June 15, 2000

Thank you. You know, when the Mayor said he was going to run for Mayor, he was absolutely terrified about making a political speech. I think he's about got the hang of it, don't you? *[Laughter]* I thought it was great.

I want to thank him and Diane for their willingness to serve. I want to thank Greg and Kathy and the others who put on this event tonight, and Ron and Beth for opening their home once again for an imminently worthy cause. I want to thank Senator Dole or President Dole or Bob—*[laughter]*—for being here and for speaking, and Jack Kemp who came and left. And Judge Webster, thank you for being here.

I'd like to thank all the Republicans and Democrats and the independents who are here in support of our Nation's Capital tonight. I will be very brief but, I hope, to the

point, because I'll be moving out of Washington in a few months. But when I moved here, I had very rich memories because I had gone to school in Washington, and I lived in Washington for 4 year in the mid-sixties. So I was here when the city burned. I was here when the city's main thoroughfares were often full of empty stores. I've seen it at its best, at its worst, and at its in-between.

When I came back here and Hillary and Chelsea and I moved into Blair House in the 3 weeks before I took office, one of the first things I did was to walk down Georgia Avenue and meet with the merchants and talk to them. And I always wanted to have a chance to be a good citizen of Washington, DC.

I worked with Senator Moynihan and others who were rebuilding Pennsylvania Avenue and was proud to be there at the dedication of the Reagan Building, which I think has been a wonderful addition to this great city. I went with Steve Case not very long ago to a high school here to talk about how we could improve the quality of education with technology.

I was, just today, with Reverend Wintley Phipps, whom a lot of you know, at the U.S. Dream Academy here in Washington, doing wonderful work giving kids from very tough backgrounds a chance to have a better life. I love this place. And I was honored that we had a bipartisan big block of support for the legislation to revitalize DC.

Essentially, what we did was, we took—the Federal Government assumed the functions that the DC government was having to pay for, that no other city in America had to pay for because all the other cities had a State to pay for it. We've also provided big tuition support for DC students to go out of State to school as in-State students and tried to provide some initiatives to encourage more private investment here, as well as to have the Government do more directly. And we've got a lot more to do, and I hope in the next 6 months, working with Speaker Hastert and others, you will see a big bipartisan initiative which will lead to more investment in the District of Columbia. So I hope that will happen.

But you know, it has been my great honor on your behalf to travel to over 60 other

countries. Senator Dole and I did an event the other night, and he said he was glad that the event could be scheduled on a night when I was visiting America. [Laughter] And I took it pretty well, considering I was jet lagged. Actually, I thought it was pretty funny.

But I've been to all these other capitals. You know, I've been to Paris. I've been to London. I've been to Moscow. I've seen the billion-dollar restoration of the Kremlin, which is breathtaking, if any of you ever get a chance to see it. But there is no capital city in the world as beautiful as Washington. And there is no city now that is any more diverse.

Yes, we've still got a lot of these problems, but what Tony Williams did was to prove that the Mayor's Office was a job, a very important job, a job that required vision and leadership as well as management skills, but a job where arithmetic still counted, a job where it still mattered if you showed up for work and really worked hard, all day, every day, a job where it mattered if you treated everybody just the same, whatever their race or political affiliation. And because all of us love the District of Columbia, he enlisted in an overwhelming response by being extraordinarily good at doing what he'd be the first to tell you he simply should have done.

And now that we have the kind of leadership that he has given our city, I want to ask all of you, when I'm gone from here and I'm no longer a citizen of this city, it will always be a big part of my childhood, always be obviously the major part of my adult life and service, but we can make this city in every way the finest capital in the world and a good place for all the children who live in it. And ironically, in order to do one, we have to do the other.

We owe it to this man to help him, not just with contributions but every day. No one could ask for more from a Mayor than he is giving us. We have to be willing to give whatever he asks from us.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:39 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Williams' wife, Diane Simmons Williams; event cochairs Greg Earls and Kathy Kemper;

reception hosts Ronald I. Dozoretz and Beth Dozoretz; Steve Case, president and chief executive officer, America On-Line; former Senator Bob Dole; former Representative Jack F. Kemp; and gospel singer Wintley Phipps, founder and director, United States Dream Academy.

Interview With Matt Lauer of NBC's "Today Show" in New York City

June 16, 2000

"VH1 Save The Music Today"

Mr. Lauer. Mr. President, good morning, nice to have you here.

The President. Good morning, Matt. Thank you.

Mr. Lauer. I don't think I'm betraying any confidence when I say that I checked with the VH1 people and I said, "How did you get the President involved in this campaign?" And they threw their arms up and they said, "He kind of volunteered"——

The President. That's true.

Mr. Lauer. —— "I mean, he's called many times and said, 'What can I do?'" Why is this so important to you?

The President. Well, Hillary and I both spent a lot of time on this, and it's important for two reasons. One is, I was in music when I was the age of these children, and I know what it can do. And secondly, I've been very disturbed over the years—over the last 20 years, more and more, as schools have come under financial pressure, they have tended to drop their music programs. You know, the principals have a lot of problems. They have a lot of challenges they have to meet, and many times the money is not there. And the school districts have cut a lot of these music programs out all over the country.

And when I heard what VH1 was doing, I did kind of volunteer to get involved. I wrote John Sykes a letter and said, "Look, I'm for this, and I think we've got to get music back into these schools." A lot of young children—we know that a lot of our young children learn better if they have access to music education. Not everyone learns in the same way. Not everyone's brain is stimulated in the same way. And the schools that have vigorous music programs tend to have higher academic performance.

Mr. Lauer. What do you say, though—I mean, let's say, devil's advocated for a second—I'm a member of the local school board, and I sit down, and I look at the budget, and it's shrinking. And I say, I've got choices. I have to make cuts. I've got school lunches over here. I have books for the library here. I have music education over here. How do you stop me from cutting music education?

The President. It depends on what your options are. But very often there are some options. And that's what that wonderful movie about music education here in New York City, "Music of the Heart," was about. But what this program tries to do is to encourage the schools to put some money into music education by giving them extra help with instruments and sometimes with other support.

And what we've tried to do at the national level, with the National Endowment for the Arts and the President's Commission on the Arts and Humanities that Hillary's the honorary chair of, is to constantly support music education, to emphasize that the schools that have good music education programs see positive, other academic advancements as a result of it, and of course, try to get some more funds for the lower income schools out there.

Mr. Lauer. But is the message getting out? I mean, you had music education as a kid; so did I. We took it for granted. We're now in a time of unprecedented economic prosperity, and still today, only 25 percent of schools across this country offer music education as a basic part of the curriculum.

The President. See, what a lot of people don't know is, over the last 20 years and particularly in the last decade or so, while our school populations have been growing again, a smaller percentage of property-tax payers have kids in the schools. And an awful lot of our schools are funded primarily through the property tax. So the schools have had all kinds of financial problems. Their energy bills go up. A lot of them have substandard physical facilities. They have the need to hire more teachers to teach various academic requirements that may have come in. And they don't want to stop any of their competitive athletic proposals. So the two things that

have suffered most in the schools are the music programs and the art programs, on the one hand, and the physical education programs for people who aren't in competitive team sports.

Mr. Lauer. But is this the way it's going to be? I mean, when people like VH1 come in and they donate money like this, it's great, but it's private and public partnership. Why can't we find a way, even through the Federal Government's assistance, to make sure that this is a basic part of education?

The President. I think we should do that. But the main thing we have to do is to build broader public support for doing it. Let me say, interestingly enough, you asked me the budget question. That's the first question: Well, what would you do if you had all these tough budget decisions? Our research indicates that the number one factor in whether music education programs stay or come back to schools is strong community involvement pushing for it. In other words, where people at the grassroots want it, the people who make the budget decisions tend to find a way to provide it.

And so, what we can best do, I think, is to point out consistently what the overall educational benefits are, number one, and number two, to try to get more Federal assistance out there to the schools to help deal with their big problems. That's why I'm trying to get the Federal Government to help with school construction and school repair, to help the school districts hire teachers to lower class sizes so they don't have to cut out music to hire that extra teacher when the population goes up, and to get the overall aid to low income schools up. So if we do those things and we get the kind of grassroots support we need, then what VH1 will be doing is supplementing a growing trend, instead of trying to fill a huge hole.

Mr. Lauer. Is it possible to take it a step further? From what I understand now, the Federal Government supplies about 9 percent of funding for schools; local and States provide the rest. Can you offer States incentives? Can you say to them, "Look, we'll provide more funding if you take it upon yourselves to make music education part of your basic curriculum?"

The President. We could do that. I hadn't thought of that, exactly in that way. What we tried to do—let me just say this. What we've tried to do for the last 7 years, since I've been President, is to say, "Look, here are the Nation's education goals. They include music and the arts. And if you come up with a plan to meet those goals, we will give you some help to implement the plan, which included music and the arts."

Basically, the specific targeted dollars we have for schools go to schools that have greater financial need, because they've got a higher percentage of low income kids, or to hire more teachers, generally, because the school population is going up.

I think if we will stay with the position that we're going to help all the schools that have these goals, which include music and the arts, and then we come in with the big ticket items, which are personnel and school building and repair, and we can build the kind of grassroots support we need, then these music programs will be able to survive.

But one of the things that really happened is a lot of folks just took the music programs for granted. A lot of people who were making tough budget decisions assumed nobody would care if they were eliminated. And it was tragic, what happened. So I think what's going to happen—you'll see a big infusion of public money going back into these programs because of what VH1 has done and because more and more parents will insist on the music being there. And I'll be glad to do whatever I can to help.

Mr. Lauer. We're going to take a little break. When we come back, I understand we're joined by another special guest, and we'll talk more about music education.

The President. Thank you.

[At this point, the network took a commercial break.]

Los Alamos National Laboratory

Mr. Lauer. And we're back with President Bill Clinton at P.S. 96 in East Harlem. Let me ask for a couple of quick answers to some questions in the news. Los Alamos: Congress is holding hearings on security breaches there. Two hard drives containing nuclear secrets disappeared. Do you think national security was jeopardized?

The President. It's not clear, but I think it's very important to get to the bottom of it. The FBI is investigating it, and we've got Senator Baker and Congressman Hamilton, who have agreed to take an independent look. It's a serious issue, and I think what we ought to do is just see the investigation through and see where the facts lead us.

But we need to do what we can to find out what happened, whether there was a security breach, and if so, how we can change it so it will never happen again.

Gasoline Prices

Mr. Lauer. You and I were both watching the news earlier about gas prices.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Lauer. People in Chicago, Milwaukee, in particular, paying 40 cents a gallon more than the rest of us.

The President. Than anybody else in the country. It's been very frustrating to me. I'm quite concerned about it.

Let me tell you what we know. We know that the prices were affected by the shutdown of a refinery, which is coming back up, a leak in a pipeline, which is the cheapest way to transport gas, and an unusual increase in demand in the Chicago-Milwaukee area. And all that affected it. Also, they used the cleaner gasoline, which is more expensive to produce, but that's only about 5 or 6 cents a gallon. So we know that it would be more expensive for a little while until the transportation and the refinery problems are solved.

What we don't know is whether there was any price gouging. So we've got the Federal Trade Commission looking into that, and we've also had the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency looking into it. I'm very worried about it. But I'm hoping that we can break the logjam on it soon.

"VH1 Save The Music Today"

[Mr. Lauer introduced musician Billy Joel, who offered his advice to the young musicians present.]

The President. The only thing I would say is, don't get discouraged early. If you'll stay with it long enough, until you like to hear yourself play, then it will be easier for you to keep practicing. But if you play one

of these reed instruments, you'll squeak a lot. If you play a string instrument, it'll hurt your ears in the beginning. Just stay with it; be patient. And when you reach the point where you like to hear yourself play, then it's all downhill from there. You just keep working.

Mr. Lauer. Maybe it's a good time for you to relate to them also. You had a music teacher in your early life who had a pretty strong impact on your life.

The President. Oh, absolutely I did. I had a—well, my high school band director, Virgil Spurlin, is still a friend of mine, still writes me to this day. My grade school band director was a man named George Grey, who had a big impact on me. My vocal—my choir teacher when I was in elementary school, I still remember vividly. Her name was Lillian Rutherford. All the kids I knew had access to choir and could be in the band if they wanted to. And I'm so glad that John Sykes and VH1 and all these people are trying to make it possible for you to do this, because it's something—you don't have to—I was not as good as Billy Joel, see, so I didn't get to be a professional musician. But I had a wonderful time. It changed my life for the better. And it still benefits me, and I still play.

President's Legacy

Mr. Lauer. I'm sure at this point in your Presidency, you have to be thinking a lot about legacy. And you look at young people in the third and fourth grade—how do you want them to be a part of your legacy?

The President. Well, I want them to have more opportunity, more educational opportunity, than they had when I became President. And I want them to grow up in a country that is a more just and decent country, where there is less discrimination and where people work together more. And I think that that will be the case. But it's really important that kids are not deprived of opportunities like music, just because of where they happen to live and whether their parents have money or not. That shouldn't be what determines this.

Mr. Lauer. Just a suggestion: You've got some free time coming up in January, and Billy, you've got a little free time. I'm thinking, you go to the garage in Chappaqua; you get a little amplifier like you used to do in

high school—[laughter]—aggravate the neighbors, and put together a little band here.

The President. I accept.

Billy Joel. How close is the next house over, because—[laughter].

Mr. Lauer. Thank you so much for coming in. Billy Joel, it's always good to see you. President Clinton, nice to see you, as well.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 8:08 a.m. at the Joseph C. Lanzetta School in East Harlem. In his remarks, the President referred to John Sykes, president, VH1; and former Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr., and former Representative Lee H. Hamilton, appointed to lead a Presidential Commission to investigate possible security breaches at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Mr. Joel.

Remarks on the "VH1 Save The Music Today" Campaign in New York City

June 16, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Good morning.

Audience members. Good morning.

The President. I'd like to begin by thanking Barry Rosenblum and Time Warner; Sumner Redstone. Thank you, my long-time friend Billy Joel; and Brian McKnight, whom I admire so much. Thank you, Chancellor Levy.

I'd like to thank the student band over here from Dr. Susan McKinney Junior High School. Thank you for being here. I see Comptroller Green, President Fields, Senator; thank you all for being here.

I'd like to thank Randi Weingarten and the people from the United Federation of Teachers who are here. I don't know if any Members of the Congress are here. I think they're still voting—[laughter]—which is not a bad thing.

So what I would like to do now is to begin with the important things. First, my long-time friend John Sykes—I say "long-time friend"; we've only really known each other

about 4 years, but I've spent more time with him in the last 4 years than anybody but Hillary, I think—[laughter]—because of our love for music and because of this project, which—there have been only a few days when I wondered if I made a mistake volunteering to help, because he took it seriously.

But I do love this, and I'll say a little more about it in a moment. I love it because of the potential it has to transform the lives of these young people. And I would like to say, first of all, Kelvin, I thought you did a great job speaking up here. One of the reasons I like music, is it gives young people self-confidence and a sense of the reward you get for disciplined effort, so more of them would be able to speak like you in public. That was good.

And I would like to say especially and most of all how much I appreciate the remarkable work that Victor Lopez, the principal, and the teachers and the parents have done on this school in the last few years. I can't thank you enough.

This school, a couple of years ago, was identified by everybody as a low performing school. Eighty percent of the kids weren't reading at grade level. Enter Mr. Lopez and his team and the supportive parents: smaller classes; after-school programs; parental involvement; school uniforms; and now a commitment to music education.

In the last year alone, the number of P.S. 96 third graders reading at or above grade level has gone up more than 300 percent. In 2 years, student performance from 20 percent at or above grade level to 74 percent—in 2 years. This is astonishing for the school. And now they want music education. Why? Because it's also good for academics, as you've already heard.

But I want to just—everybody stop and take a deep breath. Look at these kids. All children can learn, and all children deserve a chance to learn. And the teachers and the principal and the parents here have done this. So given them another hand. This is unbelievable. Bravo! [Applause]

You know, I often say that I might not have been President if it hadn't been for school music. And it's really true. I started playing an instrument when I was 9. I started singing in the school chorus when I was younger than that. And then when aging took my voice

from three octaves to about three notes—[laughter]—which, thankfully, didn't happen to my buddies over here—I just had to concentrate more on my saxophone.

And I want to say to all of you who are fixing to start this program, the first music I made was not very nice to hear. But my mother tolerated it, and I just kept on working at it. And what I learned was that if you're willing to have patience and discipline and you practice, pretty soon you can make something really beautiful, and it can help you be a better member of the team; it can help you be a happier person; it can make you a better person; and it can also be an awful lot of fun.

I still play my saxophone. A couple of years ago, Hillary made a music room for me in a little room on the top floor of the White House that we weren't using, that was way at the end of a hall, and it had two doors, so no one could hear me when I was playing. [Laughter] And I still go in there.

I have musical instruments now I've collected from all over the world. I have saxophones from all over the world now, made in China and Russia and Japan and Poland and the Czech Republic and Germany and France and, of course, the United States. And I have lots of other instruments from every continent. And I just go in there, and I play. And no matter what else is going on, I can go in and play for 15 or 20 minutes, and I'm full of energy and ready to start again. That's what you can have if you get into this music program.

But the other thing I want to emphasize is, one of the things that we know—and John Sykes mentioned this—is that learning improves in school environments where there are comprehensive music programs. It increases the ability of young people to do math. There is a lot of math in music. It increases the ability of young people to read, and as I said, most important of all, it's a lot of fun.

The great scientist Albert Einstein once said—it might surprise you—"I get the most joy out of my violin. I often think in music. I see my life in terms of music." Albert Einstein was the greatest scientist of the 20th century. Some people nominated him for Man of the Century and thought he should

have been determined to be the Man of the Century. No one believes he was a great violin player. He didn't care if he wasn't a great violin player. I don't care if I'm not a great saxophone player. It's enough to be able to do it and to get the benefits of it.

So that's what VH1 has done, getting contributions, getting these musical instruments. Now, I want to say—John Sykes made a joke about the warm environment on Capitol Hill—it's not as warm as it is up on this stage, under these lights. [Laughter] This is a good preparation to go back to Congress. [Laughter] But what he didn't tell you is that he and others developed a congressional resolution to stress the importance of music education, and just this week the House of Representatives passed it unanimously. I think he should start giving me lobbying advice. They passed it unanimously.

Now, what does that mean? Well, a couple of years ago, Hillary chaired this Commission on Arts and the Humanities, and they found that the most important factor in keeping music in the schools or getting music back into the schools was not a Federal program but whether the local people whose kids were in the schools wanted music in the schools. So we need to keep trying to provide money to the schools to hire teachers, to build or remodel buildings, to give more money to schools with a lot of low income students at the national level. And we need to keep supporting the "Save The Music" program.

But one of the things that John wants is for the "Save The Music" program to lead people at the community level to insist that music ought to be in all the schools, whether he gives them the instruments or not. And that's what I—that's the last point I want to make today. You have got to help us help all of our schools keep these music programs. Over the last 20 years, we've gotten rid of music, art, and physical education. The consequence is that in the places that don't have it, student achievement is lower than it ought to be, and the kids are not as healthy as they should be. We need to bring these things back to our schools, and I want you to help them. That's one of the reasons I came here.

I'll leave you with this thought: You are living in a world where all kinds of different people live in America and where Americans,

through the Internet and travel, are going to have to relate to all kinds of different people around the world.

I just got back from Russia where I had a dinner with the Russian President, and afterward he said, "We're going to go in to entertainment," so I thought they would have someone dancing Russian ballet. I thought they would have someone playing Rachmaninoff. But instead, because he knew what I liked, the President of Russia gave me a private concert from the biggest jazz band in Russia, the best student musicians in Russia, the age of some of the people here, who were unbelievable, and the man who may be the greatest living jazz saxophone player, who happens to be a Russian, who played for me.

It is a universal language. It is the music of the heart and the language of the heart. Thanks to John Sykes and all of his partners and all of you, maybe next year and the year after and the year after, there will be more and more children with the chance that you're going to have next year, until all of our kids have it again.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:42 a.m. in the Auditorium at the Joseph Lanzetta School (Public School 96) in East Harlem. In his remarks, he referred to Barry Rosenblum, president, Time Warner Cable of New York; Sumner M. Redstone, chairman and chief executive officer, Viacom; musicians Billy Joel and Brian McKnight; Harold O. Levy, chancellor, New York City Public Schools; C. Virginia Fields, president, Borough of Manhattan; Randi Weingarten, president, United Federation of Teachers; John Sykes, president, VH1; Victor Lopez, principal, and Kelvin Eusebio, student, Joseph C. Lanzetta School; and President Putin of Russia.

Remarks at Abigail Adams Elementary School in New York City June 16, 2000

Thank you very much. I think we ought to give Mary Minnick another hand. She did a great job. [*Applause*] And I want to thank her, the other faculty members, the staff members of P.S. 131 and their families, and your principal, Walter O'Brien. Thank you for making us feel welcome today.

And I want to thank Zahra Mohamed and Andrew Wood, the coaledictorians of the sixth grade. They remind us of what this is all about. And you can see from the student cheers who has the votes here. [*Laughter*]

Chancellor Levy, thank you very much. Representative Lowey, Representative Meeks, Representative Crowley, thank you all for your leadership for this worthy cause. To all the local officials who are out there, but especially my long-time friend, the Queens borough president, Claire Schulman; Superintendent Michael Johnson; School Board President Bill Johnson. And I'd like to recognize Randi Weingarten again, the president of the United Federation of Teachers—the teachers are helping us so much here—along with Ed Malloy, the president of New York Building and Trades Union, and Dennis Hughes, the president of the New York AFL-CIO. They're also trying to help us get our kids in world-class buildings.

Let me say to all of you, as so often happens when I get up to speak, everything that needs to be said has already been said. But I want to say a couple of things to put this in perspective from my point of view. First of all, I want to thank you. Thank you, New York; thank you, New York City; thank you, Queens, for being so good to me and to Al Gore, to Hillary and Tipper, for these last 8 years. Thank you for giving us the chance to serve.

For 7½ years now, we've worked hard to turn the economy around, to get the crime rate down, to help people move from welfare to work, to help people balance work and family, to clean up the environment as we grow the economy, to make this country one America across all these incredible racial and ethnic and religious and other lines that divide us, to make our country a force for peace and freedom around the world. And we're in good shape today. We're having the longest economic expansion in our history. We have the lowest minority unemployment in our history. We're going to have 3 years of back-to-back surpluses for the first time in anybody's memory.

And here's the point I want to make. What are we going to do with these good times? I've got a simple question. What is it that

you as citizens propose to do? I've done everything I could do to turn our country around, to build that bridge to the 21st century that all of us can walk across together, to leave our country in good shape so that you, the American people, could decide, what are you going to do for the future. And I think the answer is simple. Look at these kids here. Just look at them. Look at all the different ethnic groups they come from. Look at their different heritages. Look at the different countries their parents come from. This is America's future. This is America's future.

Now, if I had come to you 8 years ago and said, "In 5 years, we're going to have the largest number of kids in our schools in history, and we've got a lot of them in old buildings, a lot of them in overcrowded buildings, a lot of them in downright unsafe buildings, a lot of them in buildings that can't be hooked up to the Internet, and I want to do something about it," you might have said then, "Well, Mr. President, that's very nice, but the country is in too much trouble, and the Government is broke." But that's not true anymore. We have the money to give all our kids a world-class education. The only issue is, do we have the vision; do we have the will; do we have the compassion to give our children a world-class education?

Randi was telling me right before we came up here—and Chancellor Levy confirmed it—we've got a program now to put 100,000 more teachers out there for smaller classes in the early grades. We've only finished a third of it, and New York can't take any more. Queens certainly can't take any more because you don't have any classrooms to put the teachers in, in the smaller classes.

We've got a program now that would provide after-school programs for every kid who needs it in America, but if you don't have the facilities, where are they going to go to the programs? The Vice President persuaded Congress to enact something called the E-rate, which allows you to have discounts at schools with a lot of poor kids in it so every child in America can afford to be in a classroom that's hooked up to the Internet. But if you don't have the space—and some schools can't even be wired for the Internet—so what good is the program?

Now, I am proud of the progress that's been made in education in this city, in this State, and in this Nation. But if we think that we're going to build the future of our dreams, making these kids go to school in places where they don't have computer labs, they don't have music rooms, they're suffocating, their buildings are being heated with coal, and their teachers are trying to teach 40 kids when they ought to be teaching 20, we're living in a dream world, and we need to do something about it to give them a better future.

Now, here's what I've tried to do for 2 years. This is the third year I've proposed this. I want the Congress to pass a bill that would provide tax breaks so that we could help communities build, from scratch, 6,000 schools. I want the Congress to pass money every year for the next 5 years so that every year we can do major repairs on 5,000 more schools every year. It's not very complicated. But what you have to understand is, we can afford it. We can afford it. It's just a question of whether we think it's important enough to do.

Now, Nita is for it. Greg is for it. Joe Crowley is for it. Charlie Rangel is for it. We even have a few Republicans for it. Representative Nancy Johnson from Connecticut is for it, and I thank Nancy Johnson. This ought to be a bipartisan issue. When the kids show up there at school, they don't have to put their party affiliation down. We just know they need an education. We don't care whether they're Republicans or Democrats or Greens or Reforms or no affiliation.

So I want to tell you that we have a bipartisan majority actually ready to pass the bill in the House of Representatives. So you might wonder: Well, this is a democracy; if a majority of the people want it and a majority of their elected representatives want it, where is the bill, and show me the money? [Laughter] Well, unfortunately, the people who control the rules and when bills come up, don't want it. That's what this is about. We have not been able to persuade the leadership in the House and the Senate, the other party, to bring this up in a way that will enable us to pass it.

What I want you to know—

Audience member. [Inaudible].

The President. —that's not a bad idea, thank you. What I want you to know is that the leadership of the House is trying to keep these good people from having a vote on school construction. They don't want their Members to have to vote against it for the obvious reasons that you might notice, but they don't want it to pass.

We have too many bills where we've got a majority for it, like the Patients' Bill of Rights, that we can't get up. So I am asking you, by your voices today, over the media, to the American people, and every day from now on as long as the Congress is here, by your support for your Representatives to say, "Hey, we love this school, but it's not enough. And we love our kids, and you have our money. Spend it on their future. Spend it on their future."

Again, I say, this is not complicated. It's about political will and vision. And I want you to know, folks, I get really frustrated when Washington plays politics just because they think times are good and there are no consequences. But these kids will grow up before you know it.

My little girl just got home from college—going to be a senior next year. I remember when she was that size. It doesn't take long for a child to live a childhood. And we don't have a child to waste. And you've got all these dedicated teachers and all these dedicated parents and all these dedicated school people out there, and we keep trying to put them in smaller and smaller and smaller boxes. This is wrong.

Now, we have genuine philosophical differences over some things in Washington, but this shouldn't be a philosophical issue. Are we going to build these buildings or not? We've got the money. Some people say, let them do it at the local level. Well, you know as well as I do that we've got more kids in schools than ever before, but we've got a smaller percentage of property taxpayers with kids in schools than ever before, and it's hard, if not impossible, to raise the money to build and repair the schools only at the local level. The National Government has the resources. This is a limited program. These children deserve it.

So I implore you all, by your voices today, and every day, say, "Thank you, Nita Lowey.

Thank you, Greg Meeks. Thank you, Joe Crowley. Thank you, Charlie Rangel. Congress, give our kids the future they deserve. The whole country's riding on it, we can afford it, and we owe it to them, and we'll be awful glad we did."

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:12 p.m. in the school courtyard. In his remarks, he referred to Mary Minnick, teacher, Abigail Adams Elementary School (Public School 131); Harold O. Levy, chancellor, New York City Public Schools; and Michael A. Johnson, district administrator, Community School District No. 29.

Statement on Senate Action on Electronic Signatures Legislation

June 16, 2000

I am pleased that the Senate today adopted the electronic signatures conference report by an overwhelming bipartisan vote. I look forward to signing this important legislation into law as soon as possible.

This landmark legislation will ensure that consumer protections remain strong in the technology age. It will help create new rules of the road for America's hi-tech economy. E-commerce helps strengthen our economy by lowering inflation, raising productivity, and spurring new research and development. By marrying one of our oldest values—our commitment to consumer protection—with the newest technologies, we can achieve the full measure of the benefits that E-commerce has to offer.

My congratulations to the Democratic and Republican leaders of the conference committee for their hard work on this legislation.

Proclamation 7323—Father's Day, 2000

June 16, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Each year, Americans set aside the third Sunday in June to pay special tribute to our fathers, who for many of us are the first and most important men in our lives. The role

of father is a unique blessing and a profound responsibility, one at the very heart of our Nation's families and communities. When we are young, our father's nurturing brings us comfort and security. As we grow, our dads are our teachers and coaches—whether we are learning to read or to play a sport—and they instill in us cherished values of honor, courage, hard work, and respect for others. Later, as adults, we look to our fathers for advice and friendship. On all the paths of life, our fathers encourage us when we hesitate, support us when we falter, and cheer us when we succeed.

American fathers today must balance the demands of work and family. As our growing economy has helped America's families meet their financial needs, the pressure to maintain that balance has increased. For the health of our families, it is important that fathers have the time, the support, and the parenting skills necessary to fulfill their children's moral and emotional needs as well as provide for their physical well-being. Throughout our Administration, Vice President Gore and I have encouraged fathers to take an active and responsible role in their children's lives. This year, in recognition of Father's Day, I am directing the Department of Health and Human Services, along with certain other Federal agencies, to develop guidance for State and local governments, community providers, and families on Federal resources that are available to promote responsible fatherhood.

On this first Father's Day of the 21st century, let us honor our fathers, both living and deceased, for believing in our dreams and helping us to achieve them. Throughout the year, let us continue to reflect on the importance of fathers—whether biological, foster, adoptive, or stepfathers—as role models in our lives. And let us express our gratitude for the many gifts they bring to our lives by passing on their legacy of love and caring to our own children.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, in accordance with a joint resolution of the Congress approved April 24, 1972 (36 U.S.C. 142a), do hereby proclaim Sunday, June 18, 2000, as Father's Day. I invite the States, communities across our country, and all the

citizens of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities that demonstrate our deep appreciation and abiding love for our fathers.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., June 20, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on June 21.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

June 10

In the morning, the President traveled to Northfield, MN, and in the afternoon, he traveled to Minneapolis, MN.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

June 12

In the afternoon, the President met with President Wahid of Indonesia in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to appoint Dr. Samir Abu-Ghazaleh as a member of the National Cancer Advisory Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Charles F. Moneyppenny as a member of the Amtrak Reform Council.

The President declared a major disaster in Tennessee and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding on May 23–31.

June 13

In the afternoon, the President met with President Fernando de la Rúa of Argentina in the Cabinet Room. Later, they had a working luncheon in the Old Family Dining Room.

The President announced his intention to appoint Dr. Dennis J. Slamon as a member of the President's Cancer Panel.

The President announced that Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala appointed eight members of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

June 14

In an evening ceremony in the Oval Office, the President received diplomatic credentials from Ambassadors Marianna Fernandez of Bolivia, Igor Davidovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sven Jurgenson of Estonia, Aivis Ronis of Latvia, Tej Bunnag of Thailand, Ariel Rivera Irias of Guatemala, Hugo Tomas Fernandez Faingold of Uruguay, Ulrik A. Federspiel of Denmark, Joshua Sears of the Bahamas, Abdellah Maaroufi of Morocco, and William Bull of Liberia.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sarah W. Mitchell as Chair and Bryon R. MacDonald and Thomas P. Golden as members of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel.

June 15

The President had a telephone conversation with Secretary of Commerce William M. Daley concerning Secretary Daley's resignation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Richard N. Brown as a member of the Federal Salary Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint Marilyn M. Porter as a member of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board.

In the evening, the President traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

June 16

In the morning, the President traveled to New York City.

In the afternoon, the President met with National Security Adviser Hwang Won-tak of South Korea at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

In the evening, the President returned to Chappaqua, NY.

The President announced the designation of Stephen Koplan as Chairman and Deanna Okun as Vice Chairman of the U.S. International Trade Commission, effective June 17.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted June 13

Richard A. Boucher,
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Public Affairs), vice James P. Rubin.

Francisco J. Sanchez,
of Florida, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation, vice Charles A. Hunnicutt, resigned.

Submitted June 16

Allan I. Mendelowitz,
of Connecticut, to be a Director of the Federal Housing Finance Board for a term expiring February 27, 2007, vice Bruce A. Morrison, term expired.

Ruth Martha Thomas,
of the District of Columbia, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury, vice Linda Lee Robertson, resigned.

Withdrawn June 16

Bruce A. Morrison,
of Connecticut, to be a Director of the Federal Housing Finance Board for a term expiring February 27, 2007 (reappointment), which was sent to the Senate on October 29, 1999.

**Checklist
of White House Press Releases**

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released June 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released June 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Federal Aviation Administrator Jane Garvey on the FAA budget

Transcript of a press briefing by NSC Senior Director for Inter-American Affairs Arturo Valenzuela on the President's meeting with President Fernando d la Rúa of Argentina
Statement by the Press Secretary on a review of the missing data at Los Alamos National Laboratory

Released June 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released June 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert and Assistant Press Secretary for Foreign Affairs P.J. Crowley

Released June 16

Fact sheet: President Clinton Encourages Support of Arts and Music Education

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved June 15

H.R. 3293 / Public Law 106-214

To amend the law that authorized the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to authorize the placement within the site of the memorial of a plaque to honor those Vietnam veterans who died after their service in the Vietnam war, but as a direct result of that service

H.R. 4489 / Public Law 106-215

Immigration and Naturalization Service Data Management Improvement Act of 2000